THE PHOENIX

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THE PHOENIX

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LOVE AND TIME

Leo Archer

PART ONE*

ONE winter night, in February of 1935, I was alone with my dog in a flat I had on Bedford Street in New York — a top floor flat looking out onto the brutal gloom of an old tenement neighborhood off Seventh Avenue below Sheridan Square, on the outskirts of Greenwich Village. The sort of starkly crude two-room flat with hallway toilet one could find for ten dollars a month those days in that wretched district. Dankly chill and drafty, with only a fireplace for heat. On cold winter mornings you could see your breath as you dressed. But I had been leading a rough roustabout existence for a number of years and was used to austerities.

I was twenty-six then and living with a girl named Celia Dejazet, a girl two years younger than myself. Although not exactly living with her. She had a

* *This is the opening section of a novel in progress.*

place of her own — a furnished room with steam heat and private bath — over on Fourteenth Street just west of Seventh Avenue. And we led partly separate lives. Celia and I had recently returned to the city after being away together for almost a year at Provincetown where I had chafed under the restrictions of our life in one household. So we had taken separate places again on our return to New York and we spent the first three days of each week apart. On those days we were mutually free to live as we pleased and to have passing affairs with others. But the rest of the week, Thursdays through Sundays, we spent together. Celia would appear whenever she was finished with her modelling engagements, usually late in the afternoons, and she'd make our supper and we'd be together and sleep together at my place.

That night, though, was a Wednesday night, so I was alone. And restless. It was about nine o' clock and around that hour of night a great wave of excitement foamed through the city and in it my heart was always rocked restlessly. It was the hour of night for wandering along the thronged brightly lit streets staring at faces, meeting the eyes of passing girls, seeking the bold glance that invited an encounter. Or for going off on random visits to friends; or over to the Stewart cafeteria on Sheridan Square,

open all night, where we habitually congregated. And having been away from the city for almost a year I had quite forgotten my former revulsion toward the emptiness of Village night life and how I used to curse myself for all the hours I wasted in it. The old rounds had a revived lure.

Besides I had an endless hunger for the warmth of companions, for the glow of voices and laughter. And even though the endless chaff of talk and arguments and hilarity sometimes palled, yet I never grew weary of staring at faces, especially the faces of women. Hovering through all my nightly wanderings was this haunting anticipation of meeting an unknown girl ever elusively envisioned as dark-haired and mysteriously beautiful and totally different from Village girls who slept around everywhere or tedious young virgins from the Bronx and Brooklyn who came to the Village seeking the dalliance and emotional entanglement of a conventional seduction.

We sat at a table in the big Sheridan Square cafeteria watching the shifting sea of faces. Our sketch pads were forgotten and with them our pose of initiates. We wished for nothing so much as to

be somehow a part of one of those absorbed groups we saw at the tables around us. Or to be able to walk — carelessly bestowing a greeting or wave — down the noisy crowded aisles.

It was the second time Marjorie and I had ventured after dark into this most accessible meeting place of Village radicals and artists. I was seventeen then, she was a year older, and we both were insatiable for these sights and sounds of rich free living.

The pale dark-haired New York University student who had seated himself at our table and spoken to us the last time we were here appeared in the aisle. He was making his way toward us. Diffident yet sure in these currents that were so uncharted for us, he was a welcome and almost familiar island. He asked us if we would like to join him at his table We picked up our things and followed him.

At his table he introduced us to his friend Lillian and smilingly reminded us that he was Paul. Lillian was a slender girl with a mass of dark hair carelessly arranged around her sallow face. She had been weeping. Her eyelids were red, her nose swollen and shiny. Paul appeared to be trying to distract her with his comments on people at the tables around us.

We contributed nothing, except in answer to a polite question from Lillian, and then only to say

that we were students at an art school uptown. But we listened intently to all that passed between them and when Paul said to her *Let's go over to Johnny's and listen to records* Marjorie and I, without even exchanging a glance, decided to hang fast to this couple who could lead us into the more intimate spheres of the life we so coveted.

Lillian acquiesced listlessly to Paul's proposal.

He turned to us after what seemed a long long time, so eager were we, and asked if we cared to come along. We hesitated a moment, as if there were a choice, then said we would like to.

I went to one of the windows and looked out.

Snow had started falling in the stillness of dusk, one of those silent dreamy snowfalls, and the street below was all white. But it seemed to have stopped. Only a few stray flakes floated by.

In the tenements across the street there were scattered lit flats in which I sometimes saw Italian families at their supper and where occasionally later along in the nights, in bedrooms with carelessly drawn shades, I glimpsed young women moving about in tantalizing stages of partial nakedness.

I turned restlessly from the window and decided to go to the Sheridan Square cafeteria to see who was there. I picked up my packet of Bugler from the table and paused, rolling a cigarette. As I crouched to light it with a twist of paper at the dwindling fire my dog Chornya, a shaggy little mongrel terrier drowsing on the hearth, suddenly arose and pattered over to the door.

So we left, walking downtown along Seventh Avenue. The air was sweet and frosty and the snow crunched under our boots.

We soon turned off Seventh Avenue, leaving its traffic and glitter of lights for the dark narrow silence of Bedford Street. We passed poor little shops with tenements above them. Between two of these grimy stores we turned in at an unlit entrance.

The hallway we had entered seemed totally dark at first but gradually there was enough faint light to see a dismal staircase.

"How far up?" I asked.

"To the top," replied Paul.

He and Lillian led the way with familiar indifference. Marjorie and I, following behind, were over-

come with excitement. This gas-lit evil-smelling stairway was so promising.

She stood there, head aslant, listening intently.

A few moments later I too heard the sounds of voices and footsteps rising on the hallway stairs and as they neared the landing of the floor below I recognized the voices of Paul Richter and Lillian Lowenthal.

Paul, a gently handsome Jew in his early twenties, lived somewhere uptown in the Bronx with his parents but spent a lot of time in the Village and often came to listen to my records. I'd known him for several years and was fond of him. He had no money to buy records he longed to own yet every now and then he'd bring along a bag of cakes or crullers on his visits or leave behind a pack of tailor-made cigarettes. Paul attended classes at New York University but what his studies were I didn't know. He was a quiet self-effacing fellow, never revealing much about himself.

Lillian was several years older than Paul. She too was Jewish, a small full-breasted girl with glossy black hair and dark blue eyes usually faintly under-

tinged by pale violet shadows of dissipation. She and Paul had attended the same high school and they had a touchingly affectionate relationship like that between a loving brother and sister. Lillian lived with a tall heavy-drinking blond Texan, a berserk sort of guy with wild eyes and a raucous laugh who worked as a reporter on the night staff of one of the city newspapers. They had a large steam-heated basement flat over on Hudson Street, garishly decorated and very Villagey. Lillian was a facile writer and her poems and short stories appeared occasionally in the slick magazines. She had a disconcerting way of gazing soulfully into your eyes during a conversa tion and of speaking affectedly in caressingly intimate tones, but she was intelligent and warm-hearted and she had a sly sense of humor.

It sounded as if several others were coming along with Lillian and Paul. I felt gladdened by the approaching company and my restlessness vanished as I went into the rear room to get some wood to replenish the fire.

This rear room of my flat was just a dark little cell, even in daytime, its single small window overshadowed by the closely looming blank brick wall of an adjacent taller tenement. I used it only as a storeroom. Against one of its walls was a battered

trunk in which I kept a jumble of old note-books, manuscripts and letters. And in a corner was a heap of wood I'd gathered from the debris of an ancient warehouse in the neighborhood that was being demolished for a new construction site. I took an armful of the wood and returned to the fireplace in the front room.

At the turn in the hallway along the third-floor landing Paul indicated an oddly decorated door in passing and over his shoulder said to us:

"Fanny Zakin lives there. Very gifted painter, but neurotic as hell. Her godawful giggle can make your flesh crawl. It's really creepy — like a little witch cackling."

"A mop would serve her better than a broomstick," Lillian said in an audible undertone to Paul.

He seemed highly amused by her mystifying remark.

I heard them starting up the flight of stairs to the top landing as I knelt on the hearth reviving the fire. I placed a heavy piece of broken beam behind the freshly rising flames, then went to greet them.

Paul was raising his hand to knock as I opened the door. We laughed as we exchanged greetings. Lillian smiled wanly. She looked as if she'd been in some fresh fracas with her Texan.

"Hello Johnny," she said.

And as she entered she murmured:

"Ah how nice — a fire."

Paul, following in after her, said:

"We came to listen to records — if it's all right."

"Sure."

"And we brought along some girls we met at Stewart's."

Beyond him, arriving at the landing, I glimpsed two unknown visitors and a startled astonishment flashed through me. They were not at all the sort of girls one saw or expected to see in the circles I inhabited.

The girls I knew, the girls who shared the precarious existence of radicals and artists, were always quite poorly dressed. They wore red or yellow cotton stockings, if they wore any at all, and sneakers or sandals. And even the ones who dressed with verve could never conceal their threadbare look.

But the two girls now arriving at the landing had an air of elegance and richness of apparel totally foreign to my way of life. They were the sort of

girls I sometimes glanced at on afternoons when I wandered up Fifth Avenue beyond the 42nd Street Library, the fashionably dressed girls who drifted by with a cool arrogance. Their eyes never met mine except blankly. And when they did stare at me I knew they were regarding me, as I did them, with a detached appraisal. We moved along on the same stream of time and occasionally we even brushed elbows, but we inhabited separate and remote worlds.

When we reached the top floor landing Lillian and Paul were entering an opened doorway and exchanging greetings with their friend.

We followed but at the threshold I paused, suddenly shy. Looking into the room before me I felt that my fantasy was turning into reality. The deceptive street entrance, the dismal gas-lit staircase, the primal smells of poverty — and now this secret enchantment here at the top.

There was a fire blazing brightly. Unframed oil paintings hung on the whitewashed walls. There were shelves of books and record albums. I glimpsed a crude table and in the corner by the fireplace a low wide couch. This room had a bare look yet it was

rich and vividly alive. It satisfied me utterly.

It was incredible that the man conversing with Paul could fulfill the demands of these surroundings so completely. He appeared to be in his late twenties, fair-haired and Nordic, with a tawny mustache. He had a look of careless strength as he stood there in his rough black corduroy suit with belted jacket.

I felt disappointed. The girl now at the doorway, blond, feline and very pretty despite her self-conscious air of haughty sophistication, kept her eyes averted as Paul said:

"Johnny, I'd like you to meet Marjorie."

I nodded my head to her as she entered.

My glance turned to the taller girl who had been only partially visible beyond Paul and her companion. Her eyes were awaiting mine and a profound shock of emotion flashed through me. Her lustrous eyes seemed to hold an enigmatic challenge. All my faculties abruptly heightened into an electrical awareness and my heart began beating wildly. Who was she? In profound confusion I remotely heard Paul saying:

"And this is Ruth."

As I nodded to her I was scorched by the thought

that Paul was aware of my agitation and was gently ignoring it. In a blur I heard him asking if I had any new records but there was no need to answer him. He swiftly discovered the Beethoven piano concerto I had acquired through a trade since his last visit and as he expressed his pleasure at finding it was played by Schnabel, the two girls moved hesitantly into the room. I wasn't watching them directly but they were within my range of vision.

They paused in front of a canvas on the wall, speaking indistinctly to one another. I was trying to gain control over the incomprehensible tumult in my heart but I couldn't and my dismay deepened. I felt myself being borne helplessly along in a great ground swell of emotion.

He was unsmiling as his eyes came to me and as Paul gave him my name. I felt the power of his attention as it focussed on me. I moved away from his searching gaze, into the room, away from those somber blue eyes.

Marjorie was not at ease. Her voice strained for the right note as we looked at the paintings and moved on to the bookshelves. There were many Russians. And quite a few of the novels of Thomas

Hardy. I saw a biography of Van Gogh that I wanted, the Meir-Grafe . . . and Gaugin's *Journals.*

I sought distraction in watching Lillian step out of her boots, remove her Navy pea-jacket and settle herself on the couch by the fire. Under the thin fabric of her black cotton jersey her breasts and nipples were plainly discernible.

But Lillian deflected only the surface of my attention as my heart obliquely followed the progress of the two young strangers through the room. I tried to imagine what sort of impression my place was making on the taller dark-haired girl and an oppressive feeling came over me. All I could see was the underlying skeleton of poverty: the gas-plate on top of the crudely improvised wooden-crate cupboard, the black iron sink, the cracked walls, the worn bare floor. It all seemed bleak and sordid.

Then — as if I were not long used to it — the life-mask of Celia suddenly loomed forth from the wall above the fireplace. The two girls were approaching it. What if the taller one asked who it was? Lillian there on the couch by the fire would glance up and reply: *That's Celia Dejazet, the girl Johnny lives with.* O Jesus! It's not true! I live by myself in this

part of the week. But she'd never understand. And it would be ruinous. She'd never visit me again.

In the midst of my apprehension a secret shame spread through me. Never before had I felt any need of concealing my established relationship with Celia. The two girls were staring at the life-mask. As I braced myself for the dreaded question, Lillian turned from the fire to me.

"Where's Celia tonight, Johnny?" she asked.

There were more unframed oil paintings on the walls beyond the bookshelves: several somber landscapes and a bright distorted interior, with the paint laid heavily on it.

Above the fireplace there was a life-mask of a girl who looked quietly lovely. I expected many such girls participated in the life of this place. But there were no signs that I could see of a feminine presence. The aura of this room seemed solely masculine.

Momentarily stunned I barely managed to keep my voice neutral as I replied:

"I don't know. At her place over on Fourteenth Street, I suppose."

Lillian stared at me queerly as the two girls moved on to Paul and the records, but I didn't care. Only one thing now mattered to me: I had to find some private way to invite the dark-haired girl to visit me again.

Lillian asked him about someone named Celia and I heard his brief response as we drifted over to where Paul knelt looking through albums ranged alongside a record-player. Paul said there was a Beethoven concerto we must listen to and asked us to take off our coats and sit down. So we sat on the couch and pulled off our boots and slipped out of our coats.

He came and wordlessly took our boots and briefly disappeared with them through the dark doorway we had noticed before. I wondered what lay beyond.

Without any perceptible motive beyond that of an overwhelming desire to be near her, I picked up the three pairs of boots on the floor by the couch.

But as I carried them into the rear room I glimpsed, deeper in the night, the sought for area of privacy where I would be briefly alone with her. When the time came for them to leave she'd come to me for her boots and while the others were getting on their coats I would take her unnoticed here into this darkness and invite her to visit me again.

When I came back into the front room I saw her half-turned in a kneeling position on the couch, adjusting a pillow against the wall. And as my glance drank in the heart-bruising sight of her slender grace I knew, with a pang of anguish, that my eyes could never be slaked with the seeing of her.

I waited until they were all settled, then lowered the needle onto the opening record of the Beethoven piano concerto and switched off the lights. The room seemed to grow vast with only the firelight wavering in the darkness. Paul was on the floor, reclining against the couch, with Chornya beside him.

I sat down at the table across the room from the couch, exultant in the sheltering shadows. Now I was free to do what I was so longing to do, now at last my eyes could feast upon her. With trembling fingers I rolled a wretchedly misshapen cigarette. I lit it. Then, as I glanced to see if the others were safely absorbed in the music, I caught sight of her

gleaming dark red shoes on the floor. She had slipped them off and they lay there at the edge of the couch like the hieroglyphic beginning of a secret intimacy.

Beethoven's piano concerto soared through the wavering flames and shadows. All through it my gaze rested on her. I watched the firelight flashing softly in her lustrous eyes and on her boldly beautiful lips where auguries of wanton delicacy were flutteringly traced. She was reclining against the wall, her legs folded back and her fur coat robing her lap. The firelight flitted over the twin shapes of her breasts beneath her high-collared sweater. She was the loveliest being I had ever seen. Every aspect of her glimmered with beauty and grace. She was vestured in flesh with the mysterious poignancy of an April evening in which moist stirrings of hidden unfoldings send forth vagrant aphrodisiacal fragrances that invade the soul and senses with a longing touched by anguish. And as I gazed at her my heart grew slowly constrained. I subdued the rising of a desire which I knew could never be appeased nor contained within the boundaries of a passing affair.

Now and again, as if she were conscious of the intensity of my gaze, she slowly turned her eyes from the fire to me in a sidelong stare and while her eyes

rested in mine it was as if we were enveloped in a cloud such as one sees on a magical summer evening, a dreaming cloud floating through the immensity of space and flashing with the silent rapture of golden lightning.

I could scarcely believe that the others remained unaware of these exchanges between us, yet they appeared oblivious, lost in the music and in their own inner worlds.

He had left the room in darkness lit only by the fire, but I could see him very well, I could feel his eyes on me. The concerto added a dimension, yet I did not really hear it. I was lost in the strange gaze of this man and I sought to understand why it was so alien. It had nothing in common with the look of awakened interest I knew. It was opaque, it was unfathomable. There was no humor, no obscene gleam, no cynical sensuality.

I knew, and knew as if forever, the boys who were bright, sexually wise to the point of irony — and virgin. They were the warm and responsive comrades of concerts and parties and plays and dance recitals. They were the Jewish students, middle class and

rebellious, who gathered in my room of our apartment on Ninety-Second Street where we talked and smoked and screamed with laughter. They were known, they were brothers. And more damning, they were impotent. Sex became cerebral and they were unable to make the transition to flesh. So it remained speculative, amusing, scientific and obsessive. I felt more and more impatient with them and I longed to escape from that endless vicariousness. All the sad fumbling took its toll in a tautening sense of frustration. It was desolate to see how baffled and helpless they were.

I yearned for someone strange, someone whose background was unfamiliar. We all ate the same kind of food, had the same Sabbath dinners. Our parents furnished our homes with the same standards of decoration. We vacationed at identical places, were invested with the same hopes. Now it was all stale and clinging and banal.

Infinitely exciting, I thought, were those cool but knowing worldly men I watched in theatre lobbies and at art galleries. They were fair and lean, cynical, gallant. They were cultured and wicked and frivolous. They had no Semitic seriousness or Weltzschmerz. They had no warm sentimentality. But they would be subtle masters of eroticism and I wanted this

sureness. The traitorous impulse that drew me to these decadents and the thought of the contempt of my Marxist friends caused me little remorse. I would allow these men only the periphery of my life.

But the man across the room sent no gay challenge to my burdensome innocence. He was silent, he seemed gloomy. He had no banter and he seemed to feel no need for the conventional gestures of host to guest. We could sit and listen to his records and be warmed by his fire and so be welcomed. Yet my eyes could not remain away from his and I knew I would return to this room. He had his own place, he was alone and he was a man, not a boy. But there was not that inconsequential wicked delight I had been imagining. I would have to trust this strange brooding creature, but I would trust him. There would be no timidity or fears. I felt bold and invulnerable and valiant.

We listened to records for an hour or more.

When I switched on the lights again I brewed a pot of coffee and there was a revived stir of animation and talk. The two girls resumed their exploration of the books on my shelves.

Her shoes still lay by the couch and she was mov-

ing about in her silk stocking clad feet. My heart raced afresh with delight over her veiled participation in the wordless erotic dialogue streaming between us. I knew she knew I was watching her and whenever our eyes now met our hidden intimacy was touched to its quick.

When he turned on the lights again I tried to think how long it had taken for the recordings to be spun out. It was as though I had floated forth from a circle of timelessness and had never known any other life but that of sitting in the firelit darkness seeking the enigma of the foreign eyes of this man.

He said he would make coffee. I watched him as he crossed the room. Lillian and Paul were talking about a protest meeting they had been to. I half-listened. Music still seemed to be in the air. I thought of how unaffectedly direct these people were. They made no effort to keep the conversation general, they offered us no trivial social gambits. I wondered what Marjorie was thinking of. I felt separated from her for the first time since we had become friends. I sensed that she was aware that I had begun a journey without her and I felt distressed and guilty. But I

knew this man's claim eclipsed hers. She, too, would meet someone soon, I thought, and then her resentment would dissolve.

He appeared at my side with coffee and as I took the cup and saucer with a murmured *Thank you* I marvelled at the palpable intimacy such an exchange could have. Everything was a sensual communication, a secret touch.

"How is your novel going, Johnny?" asked Paul.

"Lonigan took it yesterday. His publisher wanted to see it."

He wrote, then.

As I listened to them speaking of the novelist Lonigan whose saga of a proletarian Chicago family had won acclaim in the left-wing literary world, I realized that it was growing late and that I must get home while I could still account for my evening. Mother would be waiting up.

Lillian and Paul said they too would have to be going.

It happened as I had foreseen, like a dream within a dream. While the others were putting on their coats she came to me for her boots and she followed me into the rear room.

She sat on the trunk there and as I knelt, guiding her feet into her boots, I asked her when she would come back to visit me again. She stared at me in the shadowy light and her voice was guardedly off-hand as she replied:

"I'll be downtown again on Monday. I might stop in and see you then."

In the light that came through the doorway from the other room I dimly saw this one was not used. I sat on an old trunk and he helped me on with my boots. I waited for him to break the silence. He was still kneeling as he asked:

"When are you coming to visit me again?"

Now he did not look so unfathomable. And beneath his quiet voice I heard an undertone of urgency which audibly confirmed the mysterious sympathy between us. I said I would perhaps see him next Monday. He relaxed visibly.

And as we were leaving, he smiled at the others as he said goodnight.

There was a flurry of goodbyes, then I was alone again listening to their voices and footsteps receding

down the hallway stairs. I went to one of the windows and watched them as they walked off toward Sheridan Square.

It was snowing again, quite heavily now. She vanished with the others in the whirl of falling flakes. Even her footprints were soon obliterated.

In an ebbing mood I sat down at the table and rolled a cigarette. The packet of Bugler was now empty, only a few shreds left in it. I crumpled it and tossed it into the fire.

As I sat smoking and gazing abstractedly at the flickering flames I felt a presence invade the room. I glanced around.

But there was nothing, just myself and Chornya lying on the hearth and the life mask of Celia silently staring from the wall above the fireplace.

We walked up Bedford Street through a thick fall of snow. Large flakes of feathery softness fell on our faces. I was filled with the impressions of the evening, yet relieved to be free of its strangeness.

The snow, transforming our hair and brows so beautifully, and the sweet fresh smell of the enveloping cloud of whiteness made me feel indefinably joyous. I turned to Paul.

"What is your friend's last name?"

"Delaney," he answered.

"What kind of a name is that?" I asked, uncertain.

"Irish."

"Irish! He looks so Nordic."

I was incredulous.

The few Irish men I had met, business friends of my father, were dark-haired and traditionally Gaelic: charming and hard drinking and cynical. I would have to revise this concept of the Celt to include the somber Johnny Delaney. When we reached the subway entrance at Sheridan Square Marjorie and I said goodbye to Paul and Lillian and told them we hoped to see them again.

The dank subway smell, as we went down the steps, was thick around us after the newborn feeling of the snowy night. I left Marjorie with a *See you tomorrow* at the change booth, for she went downtown into Brooklyn and I had to go uptown.

The station was quite deserted when I reached the uptown platform and we now stood on opposite sides of the tracks, each making the other giggle with indecipherable sign language. Still far away I heard a train coming and I hurried to a nearby stand to buy a newspaper.

My train pulled in and I waved to Marjorie through

the window as we rolled out of the station. Then I went through the paper, folding it in the seasoned subway traveller's manner until I reached the theatre section. I had said at home that I would be going to a play with Marjorie and that if we could get no tickets we would see a movie. I found a play I knew something about, decided that would be it, and put the paper aside. I wanted no more of its intrusion.

I wanted to think about tonight's experience. Monday seemed a long way off but I had chosen it because it would appear so innocent. Mother might be suspicious of a week-end night, but Monday was safely inconspicuous. I would savor its approach through the week. It would change everything.

I did not even see my fellow subway travellers. Tonight they escaped the fantasies of their involved human histories that I loved to weave from the tenuous threads of faces and clothes and gestures. And there was another amusement with an element of danger I had started, of coolly staring into the eyes of a taking stranger. But tonight I saw no one.

It was shortly after midnight as I crossed Broadway and walked west down Ninety-second Street to the entrance of our building. A sleepy elevator man exchanged greetings with me, then we rode in silence to the twelfth floor.

I said goodnight, found my key and felt again the oppressiveness of coming home. The large foyer was dark and I switched on one of the lamps on the console table. As I was hanging my coat in the hall closet I heard her call:

"Ruth?"

"Yes Mother, coming."

I made no sound on the thick rug as I walked through the darkened apartment to the light that came from her room. She lay in one of the twin beds, in the elaborate big room she shared with my father, propped up against several pillows. She was a dark-haired dark-eyed woman in her early forties whose once beautiful face was ravaged by bitterness and misery.

"Why so late?"

It made no difference when I came in, I was always greeted with this question. She tortured herself with suspicions of how I spent my time away from home.

"It isn't so late Mother, only twelve. We went to the theatre and we stopped for coffee, then I came home."

I always began on a reasonable note, but I could rarely resist being drawn into conflict with her.

She looked her disbelief.

"Are you sure you haven't been to one of those

meetings? You know I know better than you do that they are only interested in one thing. Free love."

It was an impasse. She knew as she spoke that her words meant nothing to me. That I would evade her, conceal myself.

"And you young girls are taken in by their humanitarian talk. You think it's smart to sit beside the Negroes they have there and allow them to put their arms around — "

"Please stop," I broke in, "I told you where I've been."

I glanced at the other bed, still smooth under its heavy silk spread. My father would not disturb it until three or four o' clock in the morning, if he came home at all. This had been going on as long as I could remember.

My heart twisted with pity for my wretched mother. I could understand how his willful self-seeking dissipations could sow in her warm and loving and essentially innocent nature this distorted repudiation of sex. All men were scoundrels. As her bitterness grew, as his cruelty and indifference blighted her, she could less and less tolerate my growing intoxication with life.

I kissed her swiftly and said:

"Goodnight Mother. Why don't you go to sleep?"

"Oh I can't sleep," she answered, turning her head disconsolately from me.

I went on to prepare for bed, passing the rooms in which my younger sister and brother lay sleeping. It was always with relief that I came into my own room.

It was my protest against the rococo opulence of the rest of the house. I was so pleased to have been given free rein with its furnishing, so proud of the effect I had achieved. It was severe and modern. Bold strokes of red and black and white. I had my books and prints. My drawing table stood by the window.

I lit the lamp that stood behind my white leather chair and saw the copy of *Partisan Review*, opened and face down, as I had left it that evening to go out. It seemed very long ago.

I hurried to pull off the black and white striped cover that allowed my bed to serve as a couch. I wanted to be deeply asleep before my father came home.

When she sat waiting up like that, recounting her trials and grievances, there was sure to be a scene. And after they became heated, they made no effort to keep their voices low or the accusations private. He would use the foulest language, it sounded like gibberish. Only later on in my life did I begin to

understand how foul it was.

At first she would say *Be quiet! The children will hear.* Until — able to stand it no longer — she would pick up a slipper, a magazine, or some such harmless thing and throw it at him, badly aimed. Then I would lie trembling at the violence he hurled at her.

As a precaution I pulled the comforter over my head. And then I resisted all the impressions that crowded me, each one wanting to be lingeringly evoked. I was separated from sleep by only the thinnest membrane when I thought of how he was Irish. And an amusing recollection floated past of my father's friend Joe Cosgrove, in a taxi with us one night several weeks ago, saying drunkenly: "You know damn well, Max, that we Irish are the lost tribe of Israel. Descendants of Noah's son, Magog . . ."

The white plaster image was as serene as she looked on that afternoon last week when we sat here quietly talking. The paroxysm seized her with a terrible suddenness. For a few appalling moments her familiar self, which I thought I knew so well, stared despairingly at me out of tortured eyes, then her eyes went vacant, unseeing, and she fell thrashing convulsively on the floor.

It was like a bad dream. I knelt beside her, holding her, calling her name while she struggled wildly in my arms, moaning in unintelligible anguish. Finally she grew limp and silent. Then a long sigh broke from her and she began weeping. With her hands covering her face she sobbed:

"You're going to leave me, Johnny. You're going to leave me."

"For Christ's sake, Celia, what's wrong with you! How could I leave you?" I said in dismay.

"You are," she sobbed. "You are. Oh Johnny, Johnny, Johnny . . ."

She was the dearest person in the world to me, my closest and most intimate friend. I had broken from my family, from the Catholic Church, from the Communist Party. I didn't know the answers any more. She was an oasis in the vast desert of loneliness, a familiar and loving haven. The affection I felt for her in the beginning had slowly deepened into a quiet love, a love essentially of friendship, yet entangled in the bonds of sex. I could not conceive of my life without her.

Her despairing certainty, and the inconsolable terrible weeping, frightened me. It was different from that outbreak of hysteria in the early part of our affair when she sought possessively to tether me.

This paroxysm had an eerieness about it, as if she had seen in the future course of our relationship something of which I had no glimmering. But how could she? The future was unordained and unknowable. Nevertheless her irrational certainty had cast a shadow of dread over me.

As her recent grief invaded my thoughts, that shadow now deepened and my heart grew oppressed. What had happened tonight was very disturbing. I thought I had left all such treacherous emotions forever behind me. Instead, lying long fallow, they had sprung forth wilder than ever.

I crushed out my cigarette in the ash-tray. Well, I'd have to be careful, that's all. It would only be — *it could only be* — a passing affair.

I arose from the table and went into the rear room to get my cap and Chornya's leash. I needed a fresh packet of Bugler and sought to shed my oppressive mood by going out into the night. Chornya, sensing my thoughts as always, bounded up from the hearth and stood by me, eagerly awaiting the outing. I snapped the leash onto her collar-ring and we left the flat.

Along the hallway of the third-floor landing I glanced at Fanny's door. Its frosted-glass upper panel — on which she had savagely painted the tortured

and suffering Jew, Jesus, thorn-wreathed and bleeding on his cross — was dark save for the wan light shed on it by the faintly sighing hallway gas-flame. She'd not yet returned from her W.P.A. Art Project teaching job at the Henry Street Settlement House. Probably stopped off to visit someone on her way home.

As I continued down the hallway stairs with Chornya straining on her leash ahead of me, the opening lines of a poem Fanny had written arose in my thoughts —

In some tenement, where gas lights a steep staircase,
Lies that poet who found no hope in April

and the debonair face of Phil Kling, who had committed suicide on a Spring night almost three years ago, regarded me sardonically as it floated through my inward vision. Yes, I admitted, how quickly we have forgotten you, how seldom we speak of you any more.

I paused in the entrance vestibule to turn up the collar of my jacket before going out into the slanting snow, then started off towards the Schulte tobacco shop on the corner of West 8th Street and Sixth Avenue. From the nearby Hudson River hoarse blasts of tug-boats and deep-throated responses of incoming and departing ocean vessels bellowed their gigantic dialogues through the storming night.

Making my way north up Sixth Avenue I saw Frenchy approaching me from the opposite direction, a slight middle-aged man, his head bowed against the streaming snow. He used to be a waiter, then he got tuberculosis and for the past many years his only source of livelihood, except what he got begging on the streets, was derived from cheap packets of condoms, three for a dime, which he sold in the Union Square and Village cafeterias. He knew everyone who hung out in the cafeterias, but he was merely a familiar character to all of us. He had no real friends, no relatives he ever spoke of, nor ever any woman unless, perhaps occasionally, one of those derelict old whores who roamed lower 14th Street east of Union Square. He lacked even a name, being known only by the impersonal nickname of his nationality. Yet he accepted his life with a simple courage which always made me feel abashed. And whenever he sold a little box of his wares he would say:

"Ah, lucky you! I wish I have your luck."

He'd probably said that to Phil, too, on the night Phil bought those last ones he ever was to buy.

"Hah, Johnny," he greeted me as we drew together and he lifted his head, recognizing me. "Where do you go?"

"Nowhere, just to Schulte's for some tobacco," I

replied. And then, abruptly, I said to him: "Frenchy, do you remember Phil Kling?"

"The young poet? The one who —"

"Yes."

"Sure," he said. "Sure I remember him. And many time envy him."

"Envy? Why?"

Frenchy grinned mirthlessly.

"Why not?" he replied. "Where he go is maybe something, maybe nothing. Who know for sure? But whatever — something or nothing — at least is not this . . ." and he extended his hand outwards in a quietly bitter gesture which seemed to indite the entire world of men.

I was silenced by his response. He looked at me hesitantly, then said:

"Johnny, you have maybe a quarter for me? I wish so much to sleep in flop-house bed tonight."

I couldn't refuse him and I still had a nickel left for a fresh packet of Bugler. He pressed my arm as we parted.

Walking on through the driving snow towards 8th Street I remembered how shocked I had been when I first heard of Phil's suicide and of those condoms inflated into grotesque balloons found floating over his dead body in the gas-filled room. Was it

his final derisive gesture at himself for his despair after Isabel left him and went off to live with that tiger-eyed crud, that depraved yellow-eyed Axel Borden? There was no way to know. He left no note nor farewell message of any sort, just those.

At Schulte's I slid my nickel onto the glass counter and asked for Bugler. As I stood there, rolling a cigarette from the freshly opened packet, I heard someone who had come up alongside me speak my name questioningly, in its Gaelic form:

"Shawn?"

Glancing up I saw the intense deep-blue eyes and gaunt dark-browed face of Charley O'Byrne.

"Charley!" I exclaimed, with astonished pleasure.

And as we clasped hands I said to him:

"What are you doing down in this decadent part of the city?"

"The same as yourself," he replied, smiling, "Getting some tobacco."

He bought a tin of Velvet, slipped it into his overcoat pocket, then said:

"I came down one day, a while back, to that Bleecker Street flat you had — but they told me you'd moved."

"Bleecker Street? Good Jesus! It's almost three years since I left there. Has it really been that long,

Charley, since we've seen each other?"

"I guess so, lad," he replied. "The last time I saw you was when you came to help us with that eviction in the Bronx — it was then you gave me the Bleecker Street address."

"Oh," I said, remembering the day I had gone to help the Communist dominated Irish Workers' Club of the Bronx put back the furniture of an evicted family in the neighborhood.

So long as we could succeed in getting the furniture back into the emptied and padlocked flat, the legal eviction procedure would have to be processed through the court again. This would give the homeless family enough time to receive help from local neighborhood block parties and benefit collections, enabling them to pay their arrears, or find another place.

The eviction marshal and his two deputy assistants tried to block us as we began to carry the furniture from the sidewalk back into the tenement, but several elated Irishmen cheerfully knocked them sprawling. We broke open the padlock and opened the door and started carrying the things in. It wasn't long before we heard the siren of a police van and saw a squad of cops with clubs come rushing up the tenement stoop. And then in the general excitement —

as it was later expressed in the *Daily Worker* — an iron cot fell out of a second floor hallway window and landed on the heads of the officers of the law. But in the melee that followed we got all the furniture back in, including that iron cot.

"You remember that, don't you?" said Charley, his eyes lit with amusement.

"How could I forget it?" I replied, laughing.

As we moved away from the counter I said to him: "Come back with me to my place, Charley, and we'll have coffee together. It's not far from here."

"Nothing I'd like better," he agreed. And glancing down at Chornya, who had her head patiently cocked up at us, he said: "That's a droll little dog you've got there."

We left Schulte's and started down Sixth Avenue.

"What have you been doing lately?" he asked.

"Nothing much," I replied. "Been away from the city since last Spring, writing a novel."

The wind seemed fiercer and it tore at our words.

"A novel? Did you finish it?"

"No, it's only half done."

"You can't find another teaching post, I suppose?"

"Teaching!" I responded savagely, against the wind. "I've not had a day's teaching in the last three years. What about yourself, Charley? What are you doing?"

"Same work on the docks," he replied.

"Still with the Party?" I asked.

"Of course!"

Then, several moments later he said:

"Aren't you?"

"No."

We walked on in silence, heads bowed, shouldering our way through the wind.

"What happened?" he asked.

I sought for a way to answer him. It was like having a trusted friend, still steadfast in his devotion to the Church, asking why one had left it. What could I say to him? I knew, obscurely, that it didn't very much matter whether the Church, or the Party, was worthy of the devotion such men as Charley gave, what mattered was their allegiance to humanity and the compassion their faith evoked in them.

"I've lost belief in it," I replied.

We walked in silence the rest of the way.

On the stairway going up I saw the startled glance Charley gave to Fanny's painting of crucified Jesus, now lit up from within.

Back in the flat I put a fresh pot of coffee on the gas-plate to brew, then stirred up the fire with some kindling.

"That's a cheering sight," said Charley, sitting with

his overcoat folded on his lap and watching the growing blaze. "It puts me in mind of your Uncle Hugh's fireplace in Wicklow."

"Ah come now, Charley," I responded. "His would make this one seem like a toy."

"Aye it was big enough," he agreed. "And that great iron pot hanging in it, the one your Aunt Maura made those sweet round loaves in — do you remember those loaves of soda bread, Shawn?"

"I'll remember them as long as I live."

So we sat talking while the brewing coffee spread its aroma through the room.

"Have you heard from them lately?" he asked.

"No, not for quite awhile. I had a letter from Eileen several years ago, but nothing since."

"Eileen? Ah yes, the little crippled one with the gentle face. She must be quite a grown young woman now. What news did she send?"

"I don't remember Charley, except that they were having a hard time of it . . . I still have her letter, though, if you'd like to see it."

"I would indeed."

I went into the rear room, put the light on there, opened my trunk and rummaged through it until I found Eileen's letter. I brought it to Charley, then poured the coffee into our cups at the table.

In the silence that fell between us, as he sat there reading the letter, I remembered the night now over ten years past, the night I first met Charley. It was on my Uncle Hugh's farm in Ireland where I had gone with my father and my younger brother Thomas on a summer trip to visit my grandmother whom I had never seen before, and would never see again. She was dead now, dear soul. And so was poor Thomas.

Charley had appeared in the farmhouse kitchen that night with a group of somber men, his face pale and drawn. He had escaped from a prison in northern Ireland where he was being held for execution by the British government. Immediately following his escape the British posted a price on his capture, dead or alive, and their death sentence still shadowed him. His comrades had brought him to my uncle's farm in the mountains of Wicklow for shelter and hiding and my uncle, a passionate supporter of the Irish revolutionists, took him in.

Charley was a hero in my eyes and at first I stood in awe of him, but he laughed at my awe and would have none of my hero worship. He was the very first man to treat me as if I were a man, too, and he did this in the most direct and simple ways.

He shared his pipe with me on summer evenings

when we walked together to visit two sisters he knew who worked in an inn of the nearby village of Rathdrum. A clay pipe it was, and I could still feel the dank taste of its stem in my mouth and see the black plug of tobacco from which Charley slivered off thin slices with his knife, then crumbled between the palms of his hands before filling his pipe with it. And the very first time I inhaled from it, deeply, to show that I was a man, I had swooned away into an abrupt darkness.

O! how mortified I felt as I came to on that Irish country road in the tranquil summer evening, slowly realizing what had happened and with Charley kneeling anxiously by my side — and how grateful for the adroitly careless way Charley passed off the mishap, merely cautioning me not to inhale too deeply until I became used to the strong black tobacco.

And then the tiny tumblers of ruby-colored cordial he treated me to at the inn where his friend Kathleen and her younger sister Nora worked . . . and the walks later, in those moonlit meadows beyond the inn, with Charley and Kathleen drifting off into the fragrant darkness, leaving me alone with Nora, whose hand I finally summoned up enough boldness to seek and hold, striving to keep my voice steady above the beating of my heart as I answered her shy

questions about America — until Charley and Kathleen reappeared, their faces flushed and their eyes shining and with a palpable aura of some consumated and mysteriously mature satiety enveloping them.

And then the morning when Thomas and I lay hidden in the hay-loft because the dreaded day for departure had dawned and we didn't want to return to America . . . and my father's harsh anger when we were at last discovered, with so little time left to catch the train. Never would I forget Granny Delaney standing there in the farmyard where we left her as we passed on down the lane, her frail slight body in its long black dress and her white hair in the sunlight and the tears coursing down her grieving aged face. Twice I turned back to wave to her, then grief seized me and I began weeping too, with Thomas joining me, and we couldn't stop — not even to answer Charley who clasped my shoulder in farewell as we stumbled blindly into my Uncle Hugh's battered old Ford touring car and who said softly: "Don't weep so, my lads, don't weep so. We'll all meet again in dear Ireland some day."

But we never did. Nor ever would; not all of us. My poor brother Thomas had died and vanished in his grave when he was seventeen, only three years after our trip to Ireland. And my youthful vow to

return as soon as I was free to lead my own life had grown ever more obscured in the years that had followed.

And here now was Charley, working as a longshoreman on the docks of Manhattan just as my father had done when he first had left Ireland, as if by working on the shores of their exile they kept at least that much closer to the land of their hearts. I glanced at Charley, whose passionate dream of unity and freedom for Ireland had failed, and who had been drawn into the larger revolution which I now believed to be betrayed by its leaders and doomed to an even more tragic failure. He had finished my cousin Eileen's letter and was staring absently at the fire.

"Poor lass," he said quietly, picking up his gone cold pipe. "But she's brave enough."

We sat there at the table, wrapped in our thoughts.

When he was leaving he said, with his hand warm in mine:

"Well now that I know where you live, Shawn, I can come see you again."

I nodded as we looked into each other's eyes; then he was gone.

The wind was rattling the windows and the snow swept with a faint hissing against the panes. A fierce

gust swooped down the chimney, scattering a fan of ashes out onto the hearth. Chornya raised her head warily. Refilling my cup, I returned to the table. And sitting there, I began reading Eileen's letter.

Ballygannon
Glenealy
County Wicklow
April 7, 1933

My dear John,

I don't know rightly how to reply to your ably written letter on a matter which is altogether too deep for my meagre understanding. People here who have read your letter have declared you to be a very strong believer in socialistic ideas. Although they say what you have written is very true indeed. But socialism, you know, is banned by the Catholic Church. It would cause a terrific upheaval all over the universe before the evils you refer to could be changed. The people of Russia have waded in blood and woes for many years to overthrow the ascendency class and now, if we are to believe reports from there, matters are worse than ever. Now don't get too enthusiastic over this matter, John. It won't be remedied in our generation in any case.

The young people of every country are said to be rapidly turning Communists, and learned and thoughtful people

believe it will end in a frightful mess if they attempt an overthrow of the evil. The Church is much opposed to it and luck cannot be expected when any Movement is carried out in spite of the advice and wish of those who most surely wish us well and have our interests most at heart. Look at the desecration of those Catholic countries where the attempt was made. Communism is also said to be growing strong in Ireland, especially in Dublin, yet at the last elections when a Communist candidate was put forward he only polled a few votes. I know that nearly everybody in this country would be very sorry to see any big advance in that direction here. But would be glad enough to see it happen in England. That, I think, is because they do not love England and wish a change there.

I suppose what's been evil from the beginning of the world will be evil to the end, no matter how glaringly the evil stands out or how much the remedies are needed. You asked me what are the opinions of farmers around here. Well they are just hanging on, hoping for the best to happen. Their conditions of a livelihood are at the very lowest ebb at present, conditions were never worse is their convinced belief. For this they believe, and rightly so, England is principally to blame. I think that until the day of England's downfall no prosperity awaits them. When that day arrives, which they so much long for, they will then strike out for their full freedom and smash up

the division created by the English, the boundary separating North and South, their base for attack.

Well dear John, you are of a brave and fighting race, come to Ireland then and throw in your lot in the struggle for the true freedom of a pure and Catholic race. But dear cousin, about your coming back to Ireland on hope of any appointment to teach, we would all indeed be delighted to have you here, but your wish and expectation would most surely be disappointing, as they make no appointments over here under any circumstances for any whose qualifications are not had through the National University. And above all things needed most is having a high certificate for the teaching of the Gaelic language. In many of the schools they now teach nothing else but Gaelic. You see they are trying to get the Irish language back again. Besides, dear John, there are hundreds of teachers here, having received the best of education and passed through all their exams, with the same plight as in your country, they cannot find work.

It seems strange, as somebody said here to whom I showed your letter, of anybody in America wanting to come to Ireland to settle while it is the wish of so many in Ireland to get out to America, believing there are such poor prospects of a livelihood anywhere else. What is the population of America? In Ireland there are only between four and five million, and of that number there are many unemployed

and the conditions of living for most is very poor indeed. Well John, I must say your letter was very interesting indeed and all my friends thought and said the same and also said it was very true. And you need not think this is all my own composition, John. Father helped me with some of it.

You asked me to tell you all about myself. From when I was very small I always had a very great desire to be a teacher and I still have that desire. But I know now that I shall never be able to. Well the world is full of disappointments. The only thing for me now, I think, would be dressmaking and I think I would rather like it. That is if we ever get out of farming. As it is there is plenty for me to do here helping Mother. I feel lonely at times for my sisters Una and Sheila, but I will get over that. I am fond of reading. I read a lot of books. I don't think there has been any further improvement on my leg for a long time. But I often realize I should not complain, for it could be far worse. Some people tell me I am improving and others say I will get all right, in time I will grow out of it. I went to a specialist in Dublin a few years ago. He said he had known several cases like mine and they all grew out of it, and so would I. So I have hope. At first, as you might remember, I was going about on crutches and could not put my left foot to the ground

at all. Now thank God I can go about anywhere without either crutch or stick. I walk three miles to mass every Sunday and then back and never feel a bit tired after it. I don't believe in doctors anymore. I believe prayer is the only hope.

Father and Mother and all the boys are playing cards around the fire. Seamus is thirteen now and he is a great help to Father on the farm. I was eighteen on the 8th of this past February. How the years fly by. Aunt Kate showed us the lovely poem you composed about Ireland. Have you any more of your own composing John? I would love to have them. I have the one Aunt Kate left yet. Well I am completely exhausted now so I had better finish with all my love and wishes for a happy Easter.

From your loving cousin
Eileen

P.S. I am sending you this spray of Saint Patrick's tear shamrock which I grew in a box in the window, hoping you will have it in time.

Eileen

It was after I finished reading the letrer and was folding it to replace it in its envelope that I saw the ten dollar bill Charley had left under it.

(To be continued)

BREAKING DOWN THE NIGHT

Barbara A. Holland

When you are used to nights
that are filled with flutterings
and tweakings, what
do you do when you meet
one which says
absolutely nothing and presides,
rock faced and obstinate?

What do you say
to the darkness
when its speaking has removed
itself to most uncertain
places or listens at the thin
screen of consciousness
waiting for you
to talk?

Will you oblige it
with a volley of vituperation aimed
at nothing in this world
or will you also wait, if only just
to see which one of you
can wait the longest?

RAG PICKER

Barbara A. Holland

There you go, hung from
whatever support keeps you dangled to
scuff of feet that drag
to the weight of the shadow
they tow behind them.

So, why is your neck
worn out with your head,
and why do you gnaw
reluctantly on a knuckle
that you never really liked?

Suppose you had to haul
your image about as I do,
and that includes your shadow
as well as the droop
in the slouch that casts it!

I have strained against the worst laggards
there are in the junkyards of imagery
and I have never gone
on a diet of fingers. I need them
to repair their shadows.

AMONG SO MANY FACES

Barbara A. Holland

There, at my feet, the moon
crowded within the confines
of a meagre puddle, rumples a thousand
faces through a panic trial
of as many chills that shatters all
and sheds them, leaving none
successors to its token ivory.

And mine? Was it among the discards
so impetuously shrugged away
in spasms of impatient
riffling which my foot so nearly
interrupted when it trod the moon
to wreckage of discordant laughter?

Who can say? The puddle's face
is mine now, and the moon is gone;
its many faces, all at once, forgotten.

FOR P.

Martin Steingesser

brushes in paint cans
fresh whitewash on walls still wet
we lie on the unmade bed
each in the other's arms

dusk engulfs the windows
while the streaming pulse of our blood
mutes the night sounds of the city

in this peaceful darkness
moonlight now is spreading slowly over the walls
the room is growing luminous and white
all round us

OUR WORDS ARE SWIRLING ROUND US

Martin Steingesser

our words are swirling round us like snow
in wind we're running and shouting to keep
warm you say *kiss*

me! and *yes* i am shouting *i*
love you back the words go
along mcdougal street to either
side falling as we run
holding each other's hand tightly and kissing

I am thinking the wind
is blowing kisses
and our words down the empty
streets and wherever
they blow they

close behind us like snow

LINE DRAWING

Jacques Hnizdovsky

COMMUNION

Robert Hinckley

Along a woodland path
a giant gray beech was used by men
to bear the emblems of their souls.
Carved in the bark in healed dark strokes:
Eric 1961 GLB 1956 R & M AJ & DC
and drifting others, long blurred, vanishing together
in the skeins of time.
My fingers on the scarred bark joined me
to them all – tree and men – indivisible companions
in the lifestream flowing forth from Earth
and ever raising new orisons to the skies.

ON MY PENCHANT FOR *HER* DARK COUNSEL

M. Trap

An ear would consult me in the old days.
Or an arm would tread in the water's dark mind
to be near. I harbored the ear, the arm openly.
No one quarreled with my dreaming leg
or sought to end its voyages.
They saw tousled hair, the Rimbaud I talked to
in the hubbub of travelling circuses,
and my vacant bed. Then my twin
knocked on the Berkley table I had garnered
from voyaging. (Yes, *one* of my travels
was Virginia Woolf.)
But *her* madness
and mine separate at personality's spring
into the river. Off the bridge I dive.
Height. Always height!
While she dives from the land where *all* roots
sing above the moss where families earn
errands to run for each other & can *slap*
the dog or pet it — let it be bitch or friend.
I can't help it if she couldn't *do* it.
I can't help it if *even* Hart wandered over
the railing, trying to dry all the threads

of his coat. Off the bridge I dive.
That's right. No money in a greenhouse.
But in *real* sufficiency. And to be near,
to be near,
my twin,
in the water's dark mind,
brings a throat —
& my voice is complete.
I have no need of the ear, the arm, then,
consenting to by now & assigned to the
emergent gossip, for back to the bridge,
back on the bridge,
where a toll is collected
by an *older* attendant than this afternoon's.
I will be noticed,
be seen again & again
& not mistaken for Icarus,
an artisan of individuality,
but a consummate swimmer
whose voice,
until *every* swimmer gets there,
will give out & break towards its twin,
the throat in her hand offering dark counsel.
Dark —
but counsel,
for she, *alone*, can give it,
my bete noire,
my *cunning* other self,

who, long ago, bargained Rimbaud off to Verlaine
& tells me *urgency* is needed now as then.
The table, she says, is *still* missing.
And I consent to take the throat & gentle her;
yes, gentle,
for I have pushed Rimbaud,
that second thigh,
that left leg,
back to its belly where its double sex sleeps.
And floating there,
as he does now,
as past effort,
I can come up then,
showing *how* she has taught me
to use my mind:
I,
for one,
mentioning it,
mindful
of *all* the gossip.

THE ORACLE'S EYE GLASSES

M. Trap

Shambling each day with a different face.
—*Garcia Lorca*

Detained too long
to parental rage, the cuckold's misery, her hand's intimate hauteur
to the student's fatuous chair
whose legs were straddled by curses
those curses
of the envious
lamenting the mysterious air
of the river where we met
offended by my sex choosing its own kind
they made jokes, too,
that spoke of narcistic love
but when the alphabed estranged the fairy tale
they knew we were seriously in love
& her husband too wept at the sleeve of the folk singer
who choked back the *other* words to get *those* protest songs out
the ones of deterministic origin
& feeling the vibrato of Goneril's voice

they knew that Lear's ear was tested in a derelict's sleeve
among the maiden's pure forms
& the land in the guise of a voice
beckoned the insistences of certain taboos
& the giant hands of small & badly written poems of nostalgia
induced the high soprano voice at the edge of the sea
to let go the poet's hands
& he knew, too, as turmoil
a torso bears more than a mask
more war than barbarism
& when turning shambling each day with a different face
he brings poetry back to the oracle's eye glasses
in some of the clouds over its perspectives
there is a charred tinge as if Verlaine had revisited frailty
but seeing the children come, *calmed*, laughing, making jokes about him,
he knows Marisol is about,
satirizing, as always, Immortality
& he *longs*, too, as *she* does, for *it* & *love*
but not talking,
not gossiping
not *even* whispering passionate love words a *first* time,
no one knows, so no one comes,

& a ghost in the oracle's eye glasses welcomes them
back,
a high titter among certain circles where twins love,
and then a prickle on the flesh,
a narcistic prickle,
& you and I know
these Dopplegangers,
these two,
have *let* us in on the secret but we cannot speak
for *wonder.*
And who the hell would go in there when they have
mentioned *that.*

IN THE DAYS OF *HER* DISAPPEARANCES

M. Trap

The house's feet are in the sky,
and I don't know where I am.
That river and those trees
I know — they grew from *my* hand.
But these undimensional people
& the skylights of rain
and the ladders with the Three
Terrors and The Twins
and the stone that is a
handkerchief — *I* don't know.
I always thought propriety
less than reason. But now
my body is lost. Three
fingers of my right hand, emerging
from the eggshell
type this up, and the other
two fingers gossip.
This is true of all *my* work.
This is true of most of *us.*
Only Rimbaud *touched* the stone
correctly. But I have to admit
that Merwin is emerging as his twin.
Every morning when the ladders of dawn

appear out of the impersonal elements
which we long to find our way back into
Rimbaud comes with the stone
he has pondered all night
and *hands* it to Merwin,
who, pulled into the sky,
drops in the printed manner
of the child little drawings
of the country and the city.
Today I read one that was three
years old and had been read only
by two others. Their initials
were in the corner of the drawings
near the high rung of the ladder
which everyone uses to mean his
name now. I saw *W* and *S*.
"Water and Stone," I murmured.
Then it was dark and the wind
cried a little under the house's
feet, and the high rung stopped
pulling Merwin. Rimbaud came
then and *his* name put away all
the rungs but the lowest.
Is the true blessing of life then
that being dead we long for less?
Or has illusion overcome
both Rimbaud and Merwin?
It is now I *long* to have my hand

whole, for I am so *fond* of them,
I long to know, for *once*, why in
typing up a poem I do what they do:
put my feet in water
and where the stone lives dry my eyes.
Why doesn't my hand tell the truth:
that when I dry my eyes
on the stone, my feet get wetter.

THE HISTORY OF MY PARACHUTE YET, ANOTHER MYTH

M. Trap

For the interview
I am very ragged.
My coat is frayed,
frayed cuffs, pockets,
a button missing.
I can't match it.

"Take your coat off," she says.
Everybody in Boston says that.
They want to look at you from
the outside in. Inside,
still my outside, it is no better.
Everything on me is wearing out
against opposition. She wears me out.
She knows I have fallen into trees
all my life, lets me fall again.
She doesn't care why or *even* from
what distance I have fallen.
The fact is, I fall into trees.

In five minutes, I am on the limb,
barking my face. She has never

looked *that* high or *that* low.
It is what happens afterwards,
(where we are the most),
where she looks. I am right there.
Climbing into my coat,
out of the tree, I look
at the tree. Maybe
Zakariya al-Quaswini
could describe it, or
Dafydd ap Gwilym would
delight in it, but this
is no *Yggdrasill*,
and they have *never*
described it or delighted in it
that I know of. And this is
happening in the 20th century.
Only one statement can be made:
Everyone is disrespectful of the *sure* fall.

Outside, there are fifteen trees
I can fall into. I fall into them all.
Like the World War II parachutists falling
into the Black Forest, I count
the number of my deaths that I can
survive, see them hanging in their
harnesses in the trees. The sound
of the crumpled parachutes in the wind
is the sound of rain under umbrellas.

There is nothing sadder.

The taste of the final cup
of coffee before the jump
is in my mouth, the final cigarette.
I need both. I find the restaurant
where all the forgotten parachutists
go. (Bickford's Cafeteria)
They are in their coffee cups
jumping their past jumps
over and over again.
Their hands stray, fumble
at harnesses no longer used,
they stuff cigarettes at their faces,
their eyes, the moment before the jump.

One by one, sometimes two by two,
they leave the monotonous tables
and chairs, and go to the door
and jump down. The sound of their
parachutes opening, catching in the wind,
is the America we *all* dreamed of.
That is the way Zakariya al-Quaswini
would describe it and Dafydd ap Gwilym
would delight in it, but this is the
20th century and the sky *beyond* the trees
has become *too* well-known. The sound
of their bodies hitting the trees

is the sound of The Black Forest all
over again. There is nothing sadder.
A miscalculation: a general,
wrapped around a coffee cup,
glancing at maps, glory blurring
his eyes. America *will endure*
her trees, but not her parachutists.

The waiter curses me.
I have torn his menu into little pieces.
The pieces are memorabilia of my
transatlantic jump into Paris, landing
in the Eiffel Tower. Gwion, the Mexican-
Welsh folk singer, sings the tune of my fall
to World War II faces. They think me some nude
virgin
in Auschwitz. But, no, that is now and all
those faces are in the Che Guevara rooms
of the colleges. The girls are not virgins there.
They are nude and lying on a Castro convertible
couch that all the professors come to when
making out their grades. Some pedant says something
about a Bell curve, but he is silenced quickly.
No one wants *anything* to be known. Nothing
must be revealed, they say. They are all
"little neighbor boys". That is why the girls
trust them, and why another folk singer sings of
them.

"There is nothing more wonderful than the bow of
a ship touching a New World," Gwion says, quoting
Brautigan and saying how much he wants to come
to California
and meet him. "But I am in Boston," I moan and
hear
Gwion say nothing. Can he be a "little neighbor
boy," too?
Is America really *Amerika*?

But the waiter is cursing me.
That much is true.
I *have torn* his menu into little pieces.
Why? Each piece is a jump,
each jump more successful
than the last. Inviolable in the plane,
then the *real* jump. I am out of the plane,
falling through the sky.
Then, there is a loud noise, like a cowflop.
It is my bowels shattering.
My eyes are rolling like dolls' eyes unhinged in their
sockets.
My Adam's apple is pile-driven down to my navel.
Through the parachute straps I see the tree.
(O Zakariya al-Quaswini) (O Dafydd ap Gwilym)
The unhinged eyes fly out,
my bowels are screaming,
I *hit* the tree.

Is that *much* true?
But the waiter is cursing me.
I *have* torn his menu into little pieces.
He threatens to call the police.
I run. *I'm on the run.*
I'm a fugitive. Boston sky closes in.
I reach the bus depot.
The bus is *there*, but it is not time to leave.
I get on, anyway, and wait for something to happen.
I'm always waiting for something to happen. *It does.*

A woman in torn dungarees, frayed coat, run-down shoes
gets on the bus. Right away, I love her.
O frayed thing. Cuff and cuffed one of my sleeve —
myself on a tree.
She starts to talk,
all the while she moves from the back of the bus
to the front, and then to the sidewalk. Saying:
"I've got to do the chores. I'm going to see
my sister in Providence. I was in the Boston State
Hospital. My husband came and took me out.
He says I should fall on the ground at his feet.
If I go back in there again, I'll never get out.
I have no money to get back to Boston.
I've got to help with the chores. I've got to see my sister.

Over and over again. People stare, say nothing.

Her questions hang in the air: "I should go back
home.
I have no money to get back. What do *you* think?"
No one answers. She is crazy. They have labeled her.
Label me. I love her. Even more than *before* I fell
with her.
Everyone is a parachutist in *some* way.
I get home. Right away I go to the airport.
I must buy a parachute. I have told myself
it is my *only* hope. The man at the airport
is excited over the sale. What kind of plane
do I have. "A Lear jet," I answer. Where do you
keep it. "Sometimes at Kennedy, sometimes O'Hare."
He is not satisfied, but gets the parachute.
I strap it on. Everything is wonderful.
The *sky* is my plane. I walk out.
He is looking at me, but the *parachute* is in his
eyes, not my frayed coat, yet to the planes
it is revealed and they have stopped landing —
they are *all* going to Kennedy or O'Hare.
When he turns around, his airport is missing.

Does it matter that it is Sunday and nobody has
gone to church today? Nobody, that is, but Nixon.
But we are not Republicans anymore.
We are not Democrats anymore.
We are all *real* politicians now.
And I am ready to hand out *parachutes.*

You want a red one? What kind of plane do you have?
Where do you keep it? O where do you keep it?

Back home, my mother asks about the parachute.
I am vague, unused to my thistle-seed companion.
She does not press me. After a week, she does.
What is it for? I tell her I can back out
of any situation I want to. She, having read Freud,
nods. We'll live happily ever after.
Wherever I go, I am noticed.
My parachute is the talk of the town.
People come to the door, or speak to me
on the phone. I am invited to a party.
They ask me why the parachute?
I answer nothing, knowing it is my endgame.
But, then, after a few drinks, I tell them:
"I am a politician." They accept me, pat
my parachute, don't ask me to make any speeches,
make any promises, offer any favors, or take bribes.
I have a *parachute.* That is enough.

There are more parties.
I am invited to them all.
They introduce me this way:
"This is Blueflower-Nerval.
She is a politician."
I come dressed
to the parties always the same way.

Torn dungarees, run-down shoes,
frayed coat, and my parachute.
I say things like, "I've got
to do the chores, I've got to see
my sister, I have no money to get
back." Nobody stares at me.
Nobody is silent. They pat
my parachute. They try to get
close to it. They love it.
They love me. I am a *real* politician.
They bring babies to me.
They want them to kiss my parachute.
I let them. Things like preambles
and constitutions come into existence.
Some babies even wear black judges' robes.
But at night they return to their cribs
and can be heard praying, "Our Parachute
which art in Heaven . . ." Of course
I *always* answer them. Then, the sound
the babies make is *all too familiar.*
There is nothing sadder. The *sure* fall.
That is the only thing that can be said.
Oh, shut up Zakariya al-Quaswini.
Oh, shut up Dafydd ap Gwilym.
What the hell
do you think the trees are for, anyway?

Things like this have gotten to me.

I say, I should make my name bigger,
my fame more. I'll go to Iowa.
All the *real* politicians come from there.
Or go there. Snodgrass did.
Who else? James Tate.
Who else? Doesn't matter.
I come to Iowa.
In a week, I am famous.
I have three parachute fights
and two proposals. I deliver
a three day question and answer
session in The Union. A hippie
wants to trade his Arapaho blanket
for my parachute. I refuse.
He gets angry. He freaks out
three times on three bad trips.
He finds me again. Tells me
that he will hunt me down.
That this is America's last war.
I say, No, knowing he is only half right.
I walk all my days with night in my eyes.
He can't find my nightmare. I am safe for awhile.

The telephone rings in my room
twenty-four hours a day.
People want to talk to my parachute.
I set up a Parachute Bureau.
The hours are from 6 to 10 PM.

One night, at 6:03, a guy named Horace
calls up, wants to speak to my parachute.
I let him. He talks to it for two hours
in Latin. When he stops, I ask him how
he feels. He says: "Better." Wants to know
if he can call up every night.
I say: "Wait, I'll ask my parachute."
My parachute says: "No." Tells me he is a fag and
hung up on *his* tree: a Modern British Lit professor
in his Black Forest, and wants to commit suicide.
So I tell him: "No, not every night."
He becomes desperate. He wants
to *buy* my parachute. He offers me
a Rolls Royce. I refuse. He offers
me 100 shares in American T and T.
I refuse. He tells me he is a millionaire's
son from Forest Hills, New York and I can
have anything I want. I say: "Nothing. I want
nothing, I have my parachute." He becomes angry.
He says he will hunt me down.
I know now it is the last war.

I leave my room and his voice fills my space.
In it all the tension he is, or ever will be,
becomes a language I cannot ignore.
I write poems of his tension.
I become him in doing so.
I am him. I am him.

I am ready to meet the egg-shell
and the armored breast-plate that he
has crashed against in his Black Forest.
This will be the battle-ground, then,
and for a weapon a pen will do.
Set no days, no seasons, and if
you really want to be safe
ignore my call from the battle-field.
Let it be.
This is the *last* war.

A SUPPER IN AMERIKA

Charles Buchanan

ANNUNZIO heard the front yard gate scrape open. Should he get up and greet his mother at the door? Or remain seated till she came in and saw him slouched in the armchair with a book in his lap? The house was set back over fifty feet between wooden frame apartment buildings bordering the front yard, so he didn't have to decide immediately. Annunzio had a night shift job in the morgue of the *New York Times* and this was his day off. Why shouldn't he read away the afternoon? He had a right to the day. But the approach of his mother, returning from her job, assailed him with the realization of her strength and his failure in the test of the years since his father died. He rose and saw her through one of the front windows, half-way up the front walk to the house. She was wearing her embittered "after all I've suffered for you" face home from work. The reproachful madonna even before she walked into the house.

Annunzio remained by his chair. After almost obeying an angry impulse to sit right back down and

stick the book in front of his face, he decided to clam up and to continue reading after he said hello to her. He rejected the impulse because he felt more guilty than defiant. As his mother came up the porch steps, he made a swift search of his conscience. Had he done anything lately that might have put her in a mood?

Wearing glasses, thin, shoulders hunched together and rounded forward, Annunzio was fair and looked like a drained out Wasp. His mother also was fair for an Italian. People took her for a Polack. She looked Wop only around her ample mouth. Her father, a Neopolitan, was a bastard; perhaps issuing from an English sailor. Annunzio had his mother's wide full lips, but otherwise his features were Northern. He looked Wasp.

"Hi ya," Annunzio said neutrally as his mother entered.

"Hello."

Mrs. di Angelo's dour expression didn't change with her response to his greeting. She glanced at the book he had laid face down on the coffee table alongside the arm chair: a fat biography of Chuh Teh, the Chinese Communist general whose life had been inspiring Annunzio since lunch. Mrs. di Angelo dropped a *Journal-American* alongside the biography

and went on to her room to change into a housedress.

Annunzio sank back into the armchair and stuck the *Journal-American* in front of his face. A marine platoon had suffered moderate casualties in an ambush near Danang. Good for the bastards. And now, for sure, he wasn't going to venture beyond his neutral greeting to her.

He heard his mother go into the kitchen, then the sounds she made as she poured herself her usual three-finger measure of Kinsey Silver Label before starting to prepare supper. Well it was her booze. And she could drink it alone tonight. He wouldn't go in and have a drink with her. Why give her an opening for whatever beef she had tonight? He had no clue to what was bothering her.

And tonight Mrs. di Angelo had a big beef, but she was saving it for later. When her daughter, Concetta, came home they were going to let Annunzio know that the FBI had come to the house last night while he was at work in the vaults of the *New York Times* where all those "Ivy League creeps" patronized him. To his mother and his sister Concetta even the CCNY Jews at the *Times* were "Ivy League creeps".

Annunzio had been a campus radical during his recent student days and he had gone with the original

college student delegation which defied and broke the government ban forbidding Americans to visit Cuba. So, protecting America from corruption, the FBI checked on him periodically. On their most recent appearance of the previous night, when Annunzio was away at work on his night shift job, his younger brother Joe was also out somewhere with friends, and only the two women of the family were at home. They decided, after the FBI agents left, that they would wait until this evening at supper to start in on Annunzio together. Concetta, an aspiring actress, would be home from her department store job in about a half hour.

Listening to his mother getting supper ready in the kitchen, Annunzio forced his attention on the *Journal-American*. *Moderate casualties* meant the platoon had been wiped out. Well they asked for it, he reflected. Then, guiltily, he reminded himself to stop rooting for the NLF as if the war were a football game. Those kids in that platoon were alive yesterday. And probably were younger than he himself, who had just passed twenty-four. Yet he couldn't summon up the same sympathy for Marines that he felt for the poor bastards who were drafted and shipped over. Marines volunteered. They asked for it. In this old Hoboken neighborhood in which he had been born

and grown up in, he had known plenty of those Gung Ho types. Automatic conformance to authority was drummed into their thick Irish heads at their parochial schools. They were devoted to God and Amerika all right, those flunkies. And even if Marine kids were victims of the system, he detested them anyway.

Bitterly he turned the page. What did it matter if they and the other elite bastards got their Dien Bien Phus. Or that Cardinal Shithead was preaching against their fellow Americans who stabbed them in the back. Cardinal Shithead's picture was a constant feature in the *Journal-American* and as usual he was egging the boyos on.

Mrs. di Angelo interrupted Annunzio's thoughts. "What did you do today? she called in from the kitchen.

Scarcely able to hold herself in, she had decided to give Annunzio the business on a household matter.

"Nothin' much," he responded, sensing the accusation beneath her question.

He glanced at his wrist watch. His twenty-year old younger brother Joe was due home from work any minute now. He wished tonight were a Wednesday night. On Wednesdays Concetta attended an acting class and didn't get home until around eleven o' clock

at night. If it were a Wednesday they would eat without Concetta, as soon as Joe got in. But today was Tuesday and he'd have to take his mother's barbs on an empty stomach for awhile yet. Thank Christ he'd be moving out soon, away from her accusing presence.

The prepared supper on the stove, his mother appeared in the front room with her half-finished drink.

"You want half the *Journal*?" he asked her as she sat down on the couch.

"No."

"There's the *Times*," he said, gesturing to the morning paper.

She shrugged disinterestedly, and he cursed himself for not having remained silent.

"There's a lot that could be done around here —"

Holding back his impulse to retort that this was his day off, he made no response. Turning to the sports section he saw that she was staring moodily at her drink. Tomorrow, he decided, he'd go to the track. Get the hell out of this house. Program numbers 9 and 11 had taken the double for $55.00. 9 and 11 wasn't anywheres near 2 and 6. That meant he had a chance with 2 and 6 tomorrow.

It didn't really mean that. It was just that 2 and 6

were his magic numbers. He always bet 2 and 6 for the double. Otherwise he studied the *Telegram*. And he wasn't a bad handicapper.

While he was looking through the next day's entries in the *Journal-American* he felt his mother's eyes on him.

"You could have cleaned the yard," she said. "I asked you to do it two weeks ago."

"O.K., I'll do it tomorrow."

"I work, take care of your meals and you won't do the least little things around here. Do you want me to do the painting and carpentry repairs? The place falling apart."

"I said I'll clean the yard. I'll do it tomorrow morning." He hoped she would not go on about her life of sacrifice, but it was a futile hope.

"Why must I always *tell* you to do these things?" Why don't you ever do them voluntarily?"

Oh shit. Well to hell with the time he planned to devote to the past performance charts tomorrow morning. He'd get up early and right after the others left for work he'd give the yard a one-two, then get away in time for the 12:28 double train to the track.

Mrs. di Angelo downed the rest of her drink to fend off the thought of selling the house and moving into a rented apartment to live out what remained

of her life. But her bitterness was too deep for the whiskey to assuage. Some help college-educated Annunzio would be to her with his lousy night-shift job and his Socialist ideas. The appearance of the FBI agents last night was the third one in the past two years, but she and Concetta hadn't been any less frightened by it than they had been when the agents first appeared. What right had Annunzio to jeopardize the entire family? She remembered again the terrified nights when the hate calls first began after the newspapers and TV publicized Annunzio's return from Cuba.

Annunzio broke the silence between them.

"Here comes another of your heroes," he said.

It was sarcasm, not an announcement. Both of them had heard the gate scraping open and even as Annunzio spoke her glance through one of the front windows took in her younger son Joe coming up the walk, and she saw as usual that he hadn't bothered to push the gate shut. One son an "intellectual", the other sullen, remote, and with a stubborn chip on his shoulder for the proper way of doing things. Both of them thorns in her widowhood. After her husband died she had encouraged Annunzio, their first-born and then still a young child, to seek solace in books. Her own father, out of peasant distrust,

had forbidden her to read and on several occasions had violently ripped up library books she had brought home secretly. Annunzio read holes through the bottoms of his pants. Why couldn't he have turned out to be a plain intellectual instead of a radical?

Annunzio, leaning forward on his chair, watched Joe approaching. His younger brother's handsome classic figure always impressed him. He's an Adonis, a Wop Adonis, Annunzio reflected. He observed Joe's tough guy walk and grinned inwardly. Joe acted tough but he wasn't tough at all.

Entering, Joe exchanged perfunctory hellos and went on directly to the kitchen where he poured himself a glass of vermouth. He took off his jacket and threw it over a kitchen chair. Returning to the front room, he sank down onto the couch and drank the vermouth in several large gulps. The way he drained his glass of wine provoked Mrs. di Angelo into saying:

"You could change first. And that's no way to treat a drink."

"Yeah, just a second," responded Joe, his lips curving down in a slight pout; those sensitive lips, which gave an almost feminine quality to his classical Wop head.

He got up, but not to change. He switched on

the TV set and the screen lit up on a Loony Toon. Joe stepped back to check the picture's clearness. He didn't mind Loony Toons.

"Turn it off. I've got a headache," Mrs. di Angelo said.

She didn't have a headache. She was aggravated by his crassness and indifference.

"I'll put on somethin' quiet, O.K.?"

He switched to the simple garbage of a Frankenstein serial, turning the sound volume very low, and sat down on the floor a few feet in front of the screen.

Mrs. di Angelo gave up on Joe. She saved her outburst for Annunzio, slouched in his chair, his face hidden by the *Journal-American.*

Annunzio wasn't reading the paper. He held it as a shield to keep his face from betraying the misery and frustration raging within him. His anger crashed back and forth, against his sacrificing mother and against himself. Why hadn't he as much guts as Paul in *Christ in Concrete*? Why hadn't he gone out to work for the family after *his* father had died his premature Hoboken death? Annunzio's father had been a musician, an Italian with a high school education. Before the Depression and then on into the early Thirties he played clarinet in a jazz band, mostly in Jersey City night clubs. Until it got too lean, trying to

support his family on the band's dwindling engagements. And along with many others in those times he was ground down to much less than he could have been. At the time of his early death he was a porter in the Jersey City Terminal. One of the obscure sensitive ones in the vast ranks of the defeated. And his eldest child, Annunzio, had not become a Pietro di Donato.

The young widow, out of her courage, supported the family and she even managed to get Annunzio through college. Annunzio eased his misery a little remembering how all throughout his high school years he had slaved in that Polack's rat-infested cellar bakery. The fat son of a bitch had potted at the rats with a .22 rifle while Annunzio prayed he would miss. It was loathsome, shovelling the killed ones onto the oven's hot coals. A .22 slug can make a bloody mess of a rat. But his job in the bakery had been for his higher education and his mother had supported him all through college and every once in a while she had given him a dollar for spending money . . . Faint screams from the turned low television set wrapped up the climax of the hairy claw Frankenstein routine.

"Joe, go change," Mrs. di Angelo said. "I pressed those pants of yours yesterday and just look at them

now — you've already got them all messed up."

"Yeah, O. K."

Joe got up and went down the hall to the room he shared with Annunzio. Mrs. di Angelo turned off the television set.

"Hey!" Joe called back. "Wadja turn the television off for?"

"Oh shut up."

"Wadaya mean shud up?" Joe retorted angrily.

He felt insulted, and was convinced the family didn't give a damn about him. He slammed shut the bedroom door behind him.

Annunzio glanced across the top of the *Journal-American* at his mother. She sat there on the couch, staring inwardly at her thoughts. Her embittered face reflected the present bleak point in her life. Her devoted struggle for the family now lay in the past and ahead of her loomed a decline into an early old age. Where was the percentage for her? Remorse assailed Annunzio afresh.

The loss of her husband had tempered her character. She had emerged from the tragedy and met life, strong. But not having a father anymore had made Annunzio feel so insecure that he had accepted the refuge of his mother's strength. And for months after the funeral Annunzio hid himself in books. He would

come home from the 8th grade at P. S. 9 and read far into the nights. Books kept his mind from the abyss the family might fall into now that his father was gone. In those first years after his father's death Annunzio read his way through the maturing course of the American novel, and along the way he discovered he was one of the oppressed. He stopped going to Mass and turned toward Socialism and the radical movement.

But Mrs. di Angelo had learned typing and shorthand and got a job as a secretary. Which wasn't bad considering she was only a first generation Italian in America and hadn't even graduated from 8th grade before being sent to work ten hours a day, six days a week, in an embroidery factory. A year after her husband's death she managed to get an apartment for the family in one of the housing projects. This was a long step from their living conditions in the tenement on Madison Street, where great chunks of plaster fell from the ceilings and the hallway toilet froze in the winter.

The project apartment, clean and spacious, was on the seventh floor and had a view of Manhattan's skyline. Throughout Annunzio's high school years and until they moved into this small home of their own the di Angelos lived in the projects, with their

mother continuing her work as a secretary while her two younger children made their way through high school and Annunzio went to the crummy local Fairleigh Dickinson College. Now his mother could look forward to a decline into old age and Amerika's pauperizing Social Security pension system.

Joe reappeared. Switching the TV on, he asked: "Wadja turn it off for?"

Another Frankenstein re-run came on the screen. Joe had already seen it several times, but he didn't like to read and the television filled the time until supper was ready. He was in a resentful mood, ready for an argument, but Mrs. di Angelo wasn't up to a preliminary fight before starting in on Annunzio. She let Joe have his way with the television.

Concetta was coming through the front gate. She staged her entrance. Striding in she disregarded the others and responded to Annunzio's "Hi ya" with a murderous flash from dark eyes deepset between high Sicilian cheekbones. Her acting classes had helped the mobility of her expressive features and made her more adept at stabbing guilty hearts with a look. Her face was strong, fierce and unamerican. Her dark eyes slashed Annunzio without a break in her stride as she passed on to her room. Annunzio's shock turned to fury. He barely managed to mumble:

"This is a great family for hellos."

"What did you say?" Mrs. di Angelo asked sharply.

"Nothin'."

"Well speak up if something's bothering you!"

Now, from the vibrations in the air or from his own uneasy guilt, it hit Annunzio that the others must have suffered some undisclosed new retribution for his political intransigence. Oh Christ! why had he ever aspired to become a minor hero in the Socialist struggle. But that *bitch*!

His rage against Concetta flared again as he remembered a morning of the past winter when she had pierced him with her most inspired hateful look. Taken aback, he had asked:

"What'd I do?"

"Nothing. Nothing at all! That's the trouble," Concetta had flung from her room into which she had rushed to get away from his presence.

The scene had occurred during Annunzio's third month of unemployment after he had quit his job with the New York City Welfare Department in despair over coping with the paper work and the destitute.

And that winter morning, after half-heartedly making the rounds to the employment agencies, he returned home to read away the remainder of the day.

But Concetta appeared, unexpectedly. She had recieved a script that morning for a first reading tryout in a new play and had rushed home, her nerves taut, thinking she'd have the house to herself — only to find Annunzio on the couch at mid-day, reading. There was no place in the small house where she could read aloud without being overheard.

Concetta went berserk. She desperately wanted privacy for this snatched noon-hour rehearsal of the script. With Annunzio present she knew her nerves would contract into knots and ruin the whole effort. So she began to scream the lines at Annunzio from her room, into which she had rushed. That was the way she told him: *"Get out!"*

He fled to the Union City Library . . .

Mrs. di Angelo had risen from the couch at Concetta's arrival and returned to the kitchen to make some last minute preparations for their supper.

"Joe," she called. "You could do something to justify your existence. Come here and set the table."

A disgruntled sigh came from Joe. He went into the kitchen and began setting the plates in a careless slap-dash manner.

"Stop throwing those dishes around! Can't you ever do anything properly?

"Fa Chrise-sake."

"Don't Chrise-sake me! My back aches from doing all the little things you're too lazy to do — and that the intellectuals in this family are above doing. That damned Annunzio! And Concetta too. If their parents had just been ordinary Wops they'd be happy working in Prudential."

"Happy slobs like you and me, ha ma," Joe said.

"Well at least that way *you* wouldn't be so resentful of your own brother and sister."

"Because we'd all be stupid together, right?"

"Anything would be better than this farce of family life," she said bitterly.

A few minutes later she summoned her other two children to the table.

"C'mon Nunzy, c'mon Concetta. We're ready to eat."

Concetta, in her slip, was sitting on her bed. She was leaning forward a little, her hands close to her thighs, gripping the edge of the mattress. Her lithe body was tense, her face savage. The door to her bedroom was open and Annunzio saw her sitting there as he went to the table.

"Concetta," Mrs. di Angelo called again. "C'mon — we're eating."

She roused herself, took off her slip and hung it up, then slipped her smooth olive body into a pair

of dungarees and a blouse. On her way to the kitchen she turned off the television. Joe made no protest. He now had food to occupy his attention.

Concetta sat down at the table and drank off some wine while her fury against Annunzio kept up its war-dance in the front of her skull. Annunzio hunched over his plate.

Mrs. di Angelo served the veal parmigian she had cooked for their supper. Her veal parmigian was always good. Annunzio wished it were Bacala.

Joe began eating stolidly. He liked hamburger as much as veal parmigian. The supper scene of savory food and the angry hostile people consuming it evoked no melancholy in him. Joe knew an explosion was in the works. He had sensed it in his mother's smouldering temper and from the dagger looks flashing from Concetta's eyes towards Annunzio's averted face. But Joe told himself he didn't give a damn. He was resolved to sit back and enjoy the clash. Why in hell should he care? Annunzio had gotten his college education and Concetta was encouraged in her acting career while he was acquiring a white collar stink. O.K., then. He'd remain an outsider while his mother and her two pets went into battle. He continued shoving food into his mouth and drinking his wine in gulps.

The meal went on in silence, except for a pass me this or pass me that. Annunzio avoided even these brief exchanges whenever he could possibly reach what he wanted.

Joe picked up the bottle of wine for the third time.

Mrs. di Angelo said:

"Joe, you've had enough wine."

Ignoring her, Joe tipped the bottle and filled his glass.

"He's good at drinking it but he hardly ever contributes more than a six-pack of beer to the ice-box," Concetta said.

"Here — take ya wine! I suspose *you* bawd it!" shouted Joe, slamming the bottle down and shoving it towards Concetta.

"Lemme have some," interposed Annunzio. "In fact I bought it."

Joe's anger was diverted from Concetta and he gave Annunzio a dirty look. Concetta grasped the bottle by the neck and passed it across the table, setting it down so hard Annunzio's plate jumped.

"That's right!" Mrs. di Angelo said angrily to Concetta. "Take it out on the furniture."

Concetta, seething, shoved some salad into her mouth and chewed it loudly.

"And *you*, Joe —" Mrs. di Angelo said, "what are

you going to bash your fist through tonight? You still haven't fixed the door panel you smashed last month."

"I'll tell you what I'd like to smash," retorted Joe. "I'd like to smash the faces of my sister and brother!"

"The shy boy," Concetta jeered. "So quiet with outsiders — but so tough with his family. Why don't you take some of that fight out into the world?"

Her taunt, striking home, enraged Joe.

"You *asked* for it!" he shouted.

Leaning over he grabbed Concetta's shoulder with his left hand, shaking her. When she saw the punch coming from his other fist she shrieked and threw her hands up over her face. His blow glanced off her hands, doing her no damage — he had pulled his punch. Like his brother, his will failed when it came to carrying out intended violence.

"Stop!" cried Mrs. di Angelo, clutching Joe's arm as he appeased his frustrated wrath by shaking Concetta half off her chair.

A button popped off Concetta's blouse, flying into the veal parmigian and splashing tomato sauce onto Mrs. di Angelo's dress. Looking with heightened anger at the stain she released Joe's arm and said:

"It's a wonder blood isn't flowing around here. I won't stand for any more of this!"

"She asked for it," Joe muttered.

"That was only for starters," Concetta stated, her voice under perfect control again as she signalled her mother. "The curtain is now about to ascend on the feature attraction."

Good! Give it to each others! Joe savagely shouted inside his head.

Mrs. di Angelo launched the attack, saying:

"The FBI was here last night, Annunzio."

Her announcement triggered in Annunzio that sensation escaped prisoners must get when they are cornered.

Joe also found himself suddenly apprehensive.

"When?" he asked uneasily.

"About 7:30. After *you* went out to hang around with your pals," Mrs. di Angelo answered. "Two of them."

"They always work in pairs," Annunzio mumbled.

"Yeah," Concetta said. "We know. We're experts now on how the FBI operates."

Both women hesitated to start in on their attacks. They were afraid their pent-up anger would squander the delivery of the tirades they had been piling up in their heads throughout the day. And Joe's resolve to enjoy the scene was swiftly dissolving at the mention of the FBI.

"Well what have you got to say, Annunzio?" Mrs. di Angelo demanded.

"What do you want me to say?" he replied. "They're just making the rounds again. Visiting everybody who made the Cuba trip."

"Just their regular visit, hah Nunzy?" said Concetta. In her anger she lost the style of speech she had acquired for the stage, reverting to straight Hoboken. But she was no dummy. She'd graduated third in her high school senior class and walked home with the English elocution prize. "Nothin' to worry about, right? You're real cool — a Socialist James Bond. I can imagine how you'd have acted if you were home when they paid their visit."

"Were they here to take me to a concentration camp?" Annunzio asked.

"That's besides the point," Mrs. di Angelo said.

"You've told me a few times what the point is."

"Yes," hissed Concetta. "And you deserve to have that point driven right through your Socialist heart!"

Concetta's savagery drew an outburst from Joe.

"Why don'tcha leave him alone, Miss Drama of Hudson County? He thoud he was doin' what was right. He didn't ax duh FBI over."

"Oh yes he did — when he went to play hero for those out-of-bounds Cubans," Mrs. di Angelo said,

angrily. "And *we* have to take the consequences."

"Everytime I read about blacklists and those congressional committee hearings my stomach gets tied into knots!" shouted Concetta. "And its *your* fault Nunzy."

"That's right," concurred Mrs. di Angelo. "You showed more concern for unknown Cubans than you did for your own family."

"And he showed his concern for them in a real classy way," Concetta said. "Had a great time, didn't you Nunzy, lazing around the Havana Riviera with your booze pal from the *Daily News*."

"You went to Havana and travelled all around the globe to get there," Mrs. di Angelo said. "Me, I never travelled. And I always wanted to go to Italy. The furthest I ever got was the Poconos."

"Yeah, but he went by plane to Havana via Paris, Prague and Madrid — and *we* get the return social visits from the FBI," added Concetta.

"What did they say?" Annunzio asked.

"Oh they were perfect Southern gentlemen," Concetta answered. " 'May we come in?' they asked. 'You wouldn't want the neighbors to overhear.' And they made themselves at home and gave *us* a lecture on how national interests are endangered by the Student Committee for Travel. They said the president

didn't like students visiting Cuba. They want you to drop by at their office for a chat. They're interested in what you're up to now."

"What *are* you up to now?" Mrs. di Angelo asked.

"Nothin'," Annunzio replied.

"Nothin'?" Mrs. di Angelo said.

"Nothin'! I'll call them and tell them I won't speak to them. You don't have to if you don't want to."

"No, *you* don't," Concetta said. "You never do. But *we've* been visited three times."

"They called me over the phone a coupla times, didn't they? For Chrise-sake maybe I shouldn't have gone to Cuba while I was still living with the family. O.K., but what do you want me to do now? You'll be rid of me in a few weeks. I've found an apartment and I've got a respectable job. Whaddaya want? I'm not active now. I hardly ever go to peace demonstrations anymore."

"You were at Times Square last week when the cops charged those anti-war nuts. And got your picture in the papers again — we recognized you, even if others didn't," Concetta reminded him.

"I was on the sidewalk, just looking."

"Yeah, because you were ascared of the mounted cops' horses," Concetta said. "But you were brave enough to defy the State Department's ban on travel

and get us all in trouble."

"You're a bitch," Annunzio said.

"Ha, the champion of women. Defender of female rights. But when a girl gets mad at you she's a *bitch*," Concetta flung at him.

"Well," intervened Mrs. di Angelo, "he does seem to be straightening out more or less now." She made the relenting remark because she was beginning to feel distressed by the going over Concetta was giving him. "But the damage has already been done, Annunzio," she said. "If you wanted to defy the government you should have made sure you alone would bear the consequences. You shouldn't have exposed us to all that trouble. We were in no position to afford it."

"Damn right!" said Concetta. "We're too poor to afford your grand political gestures. You should have left the defiance for those Antioch intellectuals who led the trip. *They* can afford it. Me and Ma saw what their lives were like when they got us to attend those parents' committee meetings. Huge apartments on Riverside Drive, with grand pianos and oil paintings of share-croppers and migratory workers on the walls. What a joke. When the going gets rough those rich kids can retreat to the bosoms of their liberal families. We're stuck."

"Yes," agreed Mrs. di Angelo, "we're not like those rich Jews."

His mother's comment diverted Annunzio from Concetta's onslaught, and he said to her:

"Oh shut up with your anti-Semitism. You sound like a Mick. What's their being Jews got to do with it? And anyways they weren't all Jews."

Mrs. di Angelo was outraged.

"How dare you tell me to shut up! You better just listen to me. Being Jewish has a *lot* to do with it. They know all the angles. I'll bet *they* haven't suffered for this the way *we've* suffered."

Annunzio's heart sank. I've really put them through hell, he reflected. I really screwed up their lives.

"You could at least have shut your big mouth when you got back from Cuba," Concetta said. "But no, you had to organize your bar-room pinko friends into the *Hudson County Committee for Free Travel.* As if anybody in Hudson County cared about free travel. The only places anybody around here ever travels is to Wop Keansburgh and stinking Guinea Union Beach. That columnist for the Hudson Disgrace, the ex-police reporter, he wrecked your fancy arguments for free travel by calling anybody who'd go to Cuba a jerk."

"You don't understand," Annunzio stammeringly

replied, trying to defend the Committee for Free Travel. "My friends aren't parlor pinks. They're working-class socialists. Johnny Kelly works at Ford. His father is a longshoreman and —"

"Cut it out, Nunzy." Concetta interrupted. "Your friends are screwed up Irish. Tom Farrell got kicked out of three good Catholic school. When it isn't heresy with him, it's booze. He was a teenage alcoholic. And your Johnny Kelly, the proletarian kid who slaves on the assembly line and dreams of entering Harvard — he's a dumb romantic! Isn't Jersey City State Teachers College good enough for him?"

"I suspose being an actress is being just practical," Joe said.

Concetta, ignoring him, resumed her attack on Annunzio.

"I've worked ever since I graduated from high school. Your friends are the nuts of Hudson County. What do they ever do for Socialism except spend their weekends swilling beer and refining the fine points of holy Lenin's *Empiricism and Material Criticism* — like a bunch of Jesuits."

"What about their work for the committee?" Annunzio asked. "Our committee hardly bothered about the free travel issue. Free travel is for the bourgeoisie. We tried to show how the reality of Socialism in

Cuba contrasts with the dreariness of working class life under capitalism. Sure, Americans are much better off materially than Cubans will be for several generations. But what of it, if Americans hate the deathliness of their life? We tried to show it isn't written in the stars that people have to be joyless and miserable in their jobs and in their families. People's lives needn't be futile and wasted. Through Socialism there could be a new aura to life, a —"

"Shut up!" cried Concetta, cutting him off. "We live in Hudson County."

"Yes!" said Mrs. di Angelo. "Your heads are up in the clouds. Get off your soapbox. Besides, I didn't see you and your committee talking to any factory workers about Socialism. All you did was hold meetings at Rutgers and Fairleigh Dickinson."

"I tried to reach people around here through those interviews in the *Dispatch* and the letters they ran."

"O.K., you got to the people," Concetta said. "And *they* got at *us*!"

"You made our lives Hell!" Mrs. di Angelo yelled at him. "Filthy phone calls, hate letters, interviews with those evil reporters and sympathy from the neighbors because my first son went bad."

"At least, Nunzy, when you went off to live with Frank Cassidy you could have stayed there and not

come back here again," Concetta said.

"I was out of money and couldn't find a job. I didn't want to hang around his place any longer."

"Bartolemeo Vanzetti didn't go home to mama — but he was a man," jeered Concetta.

"Alright, alright! But can't you leave me alone? I was only nineteen. It was more than four years ago."

Annunzio, torn by misery and anger, was shocked by the fury — almost hatred — he felt toward his sister and mother. Seeking relief from his distraught emotions he shoved his plate away and rose from the table.

"Just leave me alone!" he shouted in a strangled voice as he rushed off into the room he shared with Joe.

Concetta and Mrs. di Angelo were momentarily startled by his tormented plea, but his seeming flight into surrender drew forth their scorn again and Concetta yelled after him:

"The FBI won't let *us* alone."

"Now he'll brood the rest of the night," Mrs. di Angelo said. "As if it were *our* fault."

Turning toward the hallway bedroom she called:

"Damn you, Annunzio! Come back and have your dessert."

Joe, in sympathy with his brother but finding no

words to say in his defense, abandoned the dessert too. He got up from the table and left the house.

The sound of the front door closing behind him, then the scrape of the front yard gate reached the two women of the fractured family, now silent and alone at the table as they finished the joyless supper.

Chinese medical students returning home from college
From contemporary Chinese wood-cut by unknown artist

THE DAYS OF A YEAR

Hervey White

*December 9, 1895
Sunday evening

I am in a most delightful place in the way of an inn and it costs only twenty cents for my room and bed. I almost hope it will rain tomorrow. Downstairs the wide main room with tables has an exposed rear kitchen and out in front, under a great funnel, benches are set around a fireplace where a real wood-fire blazes, not smouldering roots and brush like the one at Arce. The stone floor is swept clean and there are no fowl running around.

I sat by the fire for my ten cent supper, helping to turn the steak while toasting myself. The family here is delightful, with two daughters, one seventeen, the other twelve, both exceptionally beautiful, flirtatious and intelligent. They wear the peasants' dress, yet have an air of classic nobility.

My room, in which I am now writing, is just the

** This fifth section is continued from previous issues.*

sort of room to be at home in, spacious, with a high ceiling and freshly whitewashed walls. And I am writing these lines under the smoky light of an ancient Roman oil lamp.

I spent the afternoon wandering about the town and for the first time began to catch fragments of art dreams. I saw a stained glass Gothic wheel window, a small one, beautiful as a flower. And inside a church I came upon a twisted column inlaid with blue and pearl and gold and rising upwards like a lithe graceful body. I had always thought this serpentine motion would take from the strength, but it was not excessive enough for that. It was like the throat of one of the girl water carriers, breathing strength and exulting in it. There were old mosaics in the church floor and queer heads carved in the keystones everywhere.

In the evening I went to hear the Vespers singing. Inside the people were standing in a thick throng and soon many others, unable to get in, had to remain standing on the outer steps. When they all joined in with the responsive singing the effect was deeply moving.

This entire town is like a vivid dream. The ancient walls remain intact and the hilltop view is extraordinarily beautiful. Toward Rome there is a long level

stretch, almost like the sea on the horizon. It is very magnetic here, but I cannot stay. Something is pulling me on, a longing for a glimpse of Saint Peter's. Will I be disappointed when I see it?

Monday, December 10, 10:30 A.M.
On the Provincial Road Opposite Anagni

There is a little field of grass here at the roadside and a pile of stones just fitted for a traveller to rest on. At best the Italian roads are disappointing to an American lounger. There are no quiet wayside spots at corners of split-rail fences or under spreading trees. The fields here come close to the road, with an occasional ditch or row of hedge dividing them, and that is all there is for miles and miles along this level stretch of land.

In the hills it is scarcely any better for resting along the roadside, except for the bridges. When you are worn with fatigue, or wish to pause while eating your lunch, you can sit on one of the stone walls that guard the sides of the bridge, but it is usually a cold and damp seat and uncomfortably close to the large wheels of passing carts.

So I am grateful for this stone pile and small field

of grass. The stones seemed undistinguished at first glance but now I see they are masses of fossil corals and would give reason for stopping just in themselves.

The rain has now all fled from the sky, the air is cool and gentle, the sun is shining on yellow leaves and bells are ringing on the hilltop in the gray old village ahead. Baedecker says the church is worth seeing and I intended to stop, but the main road holds to the foot of the hill and the main road leads to Rome.

Noon-hour

A little bridge on a lonely spot of the road — I cannot resist sitting down to enjoy it. It is so rare to have a whole horizon here all to oneself. And such an horizon as this must be rare anywhere. A bank of deep blue mountains lies under the rays of the sun, stratified from dark to pale blue by level bands of thin smoke that have risen from the valley. Miles of fresh green wheat glisten in the foreground, undulating over the rolling hills. Gold and bronze olive groves on the hills to the right, cattle grazing in far off meadows, a remote peasant's voice singing, birds twittering around me.

The loneliness of my hike has been increasing. Sometimes the road winds down between shelves of dripping mossy stones where basins of spring water, with aromatic maiden-hair ferns adorning their margins, offer refreshment.

Two o'clock

No dwellings at all, only field after field of young wheat. I begin to think I shall have to go without any lunch. I ask every traveller I meet for bread, but I meet very few and none have any.

At last I come upon a peasant pruning vines in a field near the roadside. I climb over the hedge and ask him for bread, assuring him I can pay. He goes off toward a little straw-thatched hut I had not noticed before and I resolve to pay him generously. But when he comes back I see greed glittering in his eye and my heart hardens. He tries to get me to make an offer before even seeing the bread. I refuse. Then he offers to sell me the whole loaf for double its value. Finally we come to terms, though of course I lose. I pay four cents for a small three cent portion.

Making my way back to the road, I sit down at its edge, eating. A solitary horseman armed with a long gun passes by eyeing me narrowly. When he is only a short distance beyond me he stops, hesitates, then

turns back again toward me. I think of all the brigand I have ever read and resolve to parley if not fight. The horseman, however, now turns again and is proceeding along his way. Apparently it is native birds he is looking for, not foreign ones.

8 P.M. Valmantone

I entered this town this evening singing and even making unnecessary flourishes with my feet. My knapsack did not tire me after a good march of thirty miles. And thirty miles along Italian roads are longer than that many along American ones.

I was looking for an inn or tavern with lodgings when I encountered an old man who was friendly and seemed interested in me. I have found it unwise in the larger towns to ask anyone for information because fabulous sums are often expected in return. But this old fellow led me back down into the lower part of the town and brought me to a private residence. I had supper of eggs and greens with the family in their smoky little kitchen on the second floor. And for ten cents I have a room to myself on the third floor.

My room is clean and cheerful. In fact the lodgings are always clean, except in the poorest places. Even at

Frosinone I could hardly complain of the linen. The family consists of only three. The father and grown young son work on the railroad. They are not day laborers, but work as brakemen and switchmen.

I sat by their kitchen fireplace while the corn cakes for our supper were baking on a grate over the wood coals, very good corn cakes. While questioning me about America, the woman asked if there were priests there. I explained that there were and told her there were also many Protestant sects.

"Protestants are all bad people, aren't they?" she asked, turning aside to her husband.

"Oh yes!"

I did not think it best to defend them.

On my walk about the town after supper I saw the first co-operative union I have yet seen: a little shop with a few onions, other farm produce and some salt fish. On inquiry in the shop I learn that the co-operative union is considered to be a good thing, but there is so little purchasing in union shops of the smaller rural towns that one cannot expect much. The townspeople forage for their necessities in the countryside and buy produce from farm relatives and friends. Even the wood burned in the household in which I am now lodging is brought in from the countryside by the woman herself.

Tuesday, December 11, 10 A.M.
Roadside near Palestrina Station

My spirits are not in my legs this morning. Perhaps I was more tired than I realized yesterday evening. I awoke about midnight with my ankles so aching that I could not find my way back into sleep. I hesitated to light my candle and read, for the light might penetrate the cracks in the wall and cause the landlady in the next room much uneasiness about the wasting soldi. Then I remembered the remnant of the black bread I had bought from the peasant yesterday afternoon and with that and a glass of water from my canteen I had a little feast in the moonlight.

While eating my breakfast this morning I chatted with the landlady. She told me all about her life after I had praised her house. The house belongs to her. She rents the first floor. The second floor has a kitchen, dining room and bedroom. On the third floor are two more bedrooms, each with most enchanting views. Such three-storey houses as this in Valmontone can be rented for forty dollars a year. And taxes annually are only nine dollars in all.

The landlady was very proud of her son, who attends classes at the night school. When she learned I too was a student she told me her son was good at his books. He even helped his teacher before he quit

day school. She has travelled a little, for her husband has a pass over the railroads. My bill for supper, bed and breakfast was twenty cents. And Valmontone is only one day from Rome. The town was more of a castle than any I have seen yet, the walls all still good throughout. A memorable place. There was hoar frost this morning and the air is still cool. Now I must move on.

Rome. 7 P.M.

It was around eleven o'clock this morning when I reached the crest of an elevated plateau and had my first glimpse of the plain below all bathed in sunshine. Realizing that another mile or so would bring Rome itself into view I began to forget my weariness and walked on until they came together: the city and the plain, with the city white and shining and Saint Peter's dome glistening there in the sunlight, just where I wanted it to be. I stared a long while, then braced myself for the rest of the long road that still lay between us.

And a long road it was. Soon the pavement began, city pavement way out in that lonely plain a half-day's drive from any traffic. The countryside was forsaken and lonely up to the edge of the city. Now and then I saw long stretches of the arches of the old aqueduct.

Finally I arrived at the outer gates of Rome, and the sun was setting as I entered the city. I decided to stop at the first hotel I found. This might have been very well in any other city, but in this part of Rome there are no hotels, it seems. I walked on and on, trying to avoid the elegant streets and their high prices.

At last I made up my mind to ask a young fellow who had stopped to get a grain of dust from his eye, but he turned out to be a stranger himself to this section of the city. I made a second attempt on a leisurely old man who seemed to be out on an evening stroll. He smiled kindly, said he was deaf, would I speak a little louder. I shouted: "Albergo," then shouted it again, looking to see if anyone was coming to arrest me for shouting so loudly, but the old man smilingly shook his head. He could not understand, I spoke so low.

I walked on. The night air was growing very cold. I stopped on a wide modern avenue and took off my knapsack, adjusted the hand-grip and put on my coat. Perhaps I would have to look for posh lodgings after all. There seemed to be no police on duty in this part of Rome and the only open public places were wine shops.

It was getting dark when I at last stopped at a resi-

dence on an attractive street. I rang the front door bell and asked if there was a room available.

"Yes, thirty cents. Thirty-two cents with a candle."

The woman at the door informed me the room had everything a traveller could ask for, including proximity to a nearby cheap little restaurant.

So now my tramp from Naples to Rome is ended. I have been on the hike for twelve days altogether. The costs of my food and lodgings have totalled four dollars and twenty-five cents. Third class I could have come by rail for three dollars. But for the extra dollar and a quarter I have had twelve days of experiences and scenes I shall never forget. I have learned much Italian. I have gained confidence, if that is possible, in myself. I have experienced some fatigue, but no more than any man would expect who sets out as a wanderer. So now, after Rome is explored, I look forward to my walk to Florence with pleasure.

Rome via Sistina 86

December 12, 7:30

I woke up in the morning and discovered this residence is very near the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, in a very pleasant neighborhood. And before starting out on my first day of exploring Rome I

thought I would just step inside the church for a few moments.

I came out realizing that there would be no more misgivings about a month in Rome being too long a stay. There is something in that flat coffered roof of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore that moves me strangely. I had thought such a roof would not suit a church. I was wrong. Solemn, sheltering, mysterious, it is a fitting boundary for the rising clouds of incense and the harmony of chanting voices and rumbling organ. I would return again to this church, I knew. But I was now cold and hastened on to find my bank and get my letters.

In looking for another less expensive room I decided to try along the upper end of Via Sistina. The first place I saw with a rooms-to-let sign was the one I immediately wanted. I inquired at the front door, expecting to be asked an enormous sum for a small room. Thirty francs, was the reply. And misinterpreting my astonished hesitation, the porter came down to twenty-five, or five dollars a month.

We went up and up a long staircase to a room on the sixth floor. I bargained for a charcoal stove to cook food on. It was granted. I took the room. It was all settled within five minutes and now I have a home for a month to come. I might have gotten it for four

dollars, but in my delight I bargained no further.

It is a large room and has the sun all day, with a window to the west as well. A door opens onto a little roof garden where the porter's wife hangs washed garments to dry and where pigeons coo and a cat basks in the sun. I agreed to pay for my own candles and the washing of the linen. I ought not to have, I suppose, but I was secretly thinking of the little charcoal fires I would have in my stove where I could cook my own food and roast my own chestnuts.

My room has three chairs, one a semi-easy arm-chair; a writing table with a red cover; a marble-top dining table; a set of corner shelves for cupboard and larder; a candle stand; and a chest for my wardrobe.

The bed is clean and comfortable. And tomorrow the charcoal stove will be brought up to me. I have already laid in a supply of ten candles, a loaf of bread and twelve walnuts.

I almost forgot to mention the mirrors. One large one, resting on the floor, shows me the extent of bagginess in the knees of my trousers, the other small one hangs above the washstand. There is a framed picture too, a big colored print of a little boy on a pony. Neither colors nor lace is spared in the get up of boy and pony.

I am grieved only that my candle stick is so ugly.

A blue glass monstrosity such as is given away in America with a can of baking powder. In the street below are painting galleries and art shops filled with objects of marble and amber and ivory.

I went out along the avenue and through the park nearby here this afternoon and saw fashionable foreign Rome and heard for the first time in three weeks the English language again. When the sun was lowering in the west I was seized with a desire to see it set behind Saint Peter's, so I crossed the Tiber and after a long walk stood in front of the facade. I did not wish then to go in. I returned to my room, getting lost several times on the way back.

There is an American lady with two daughters in this house, on the second floor, the porter tells me, a Mrs. Jackson. But here — up, up, up on the sixth floor — I am safe enough I guess. Now I must write a letter and end this account of my first day in Rome.

Rome, December 14, 1894 8 P.M.

I recorded nothing in this diary yesterday for several reasons. In the first place the room was cold, and then secondly I was tired and most of all I was so

bewildered by all I had seen that I thought it best not to write. I had seen the Forum and the Colosseum, but decided to wait until I could give a connected account of my impressions of such wonders.

Today, however, the tide has been running the other way and I am giving free rein to my pen in my usual rambling disconnected fashion. For today I realized that after all it is not of Rome that I am writing. Others have done that far better than ever I could hope to do. No, it is of myself that I am telling here and in telling it with truth how could my narration be other than vague and disconnected, with an observation here, a feeling there, and a matrix of idle detail and personality. So these lines begin again with yesterday morning, where I left off in my usual commonplace way.

I went to old Rome first. The morning was clear and frosty on the hills, but as I neared the lower part of the city I saw the purplish haze was thickening. It was the first beauty I felt as I looked down onto the Forum and then away toward the Arch of Titus through the rows of broken walls and columns. How beautiful it was to see this hovering mist that I have loved so long, this serene morning presence, as kindly here as on the wooded banks of the prairie streams of my childhood. Was it here when the Romans of

ancient times walked these streets and has it graced this scene all through the years? And I had always thought it an American prairie presence while all the while it was theirs too.

Yet it was death I was looking down upon there in the morning sunlight. The great death of ancient Rome. Several pedlars with pictures to sell interrupted me from time to time. I hardly knew why I was so irritable, but I swore at them in the harshest Italian at my disposal.

The Arch of Severus was close to my right, while the perfect Arch of Titus was blurred in the purple distance. I stared again and again from one to the other and at the ruins of the Forum and Temple and felt an immense sadness in all this vacancy.

I walked around for an hour or so and went down the steps into the ancient market-place. It was so strange to be there. Frost and ice were still on the pebbles, but green moss was growing in shady corners, as in Pompeii. I loved the abiding moss for growing there.

Approaching the Colosseum all my expectations were surpassed. I had not thought men could ever build so stupendous a thing. In a dazed way I wandered through the galleries and stood upon the arena. At length a German lady brought me to my senses

by asking me where the stairway was for ascending into the galleries. I tried to think of directions in German but my memory went blank, everything in my mind was Italian. So I beckoned for her to follow me as I too had to be leaving.

As I climbed the steps again I suddenly felt quite hilarious, imagining I heard swaggering Roman youths exchanging witticisms of ancient times. What hundreds of galleries and passages there were.

But when I reached the upper gallery and looked down again on the entirety, the oppressive sadness once more came over me. It was mid-day when I left. And after eating some lunch I returned and wandered through it all again until the evening cold forced me away. I resolved to come back again before I left Rome and see it all by moonlight.

Instead, less than five hours later, I was back in the ghostly circle again, watching the brightening lunar light invading the shadows. I had gone out for a walk after supper because my room was too cold to sit in, and the walk, unintentionally, brought me back to the Colosseum.

The moon was full and at its roundest and the columns in the Forum were spectral. I stood in meditation for some time, then returned home. But there still remains three hours of yesterday of which I have

said nothing. I was in the lower part of the city for awhile and then came out at the piazza on the top of Capotoline Hill. A piazza is a disappointing place, even if Michael Angelo did lay it out and plant his statues there. It is so barren and grey and stony — all paved, endless paving, the eye becomes weary of the serried rows of cobble stones — and the ear grows nervous with the jarring rattle of noisy carriage wheels. How welcome was the little green bank of grass and palms farther down the hillside where a full lipped Rienzi scowls in bronze.

But wherever I go, I come upon things to delay me, and I would get nowhere at all if the cold did not force me to keep walking. This morning I started out for Saint Peter's by a new and indirect route and suddenly the great column of Marcus Aurelius had me circling its mighty base and every irritable passer-by jostled me and muttered unintelligible things because I was heedlessly walking around and staring upwards.

Soon afterwards the Pantheon was sprawling in my way and I chilled and shivered there. But once over the Tiber and outside the walls I walked along briskly until the gate at St. Peter's was reached, then I was in again, breathless over other vastnesses. I spent the morning there. But all my adjectives are

exhausted tonight, so I will turn to other things.

I have made arrangements to take my evening meal with the porter and his wife. She is a very good cook and I get my supper for ten cents. Tonight there was a stew with onions, and my second helping was not small. There was also an excellent salad. And I was served half an orange for dessert.

I could take my breakfast with them too and still keep within my budget of fifty cents a day. But my charcoal and coke fuel along with washing and gallery fees and candles must be remembered. So I guess I'd best have my breakfast in my room on the five cent plan of bread and nuts or figs. Moreover the latter is more independent and better suits my disposition, even if it is a little shivery.

It is now ten o'clock and my little smudge of sulphur and carbon dioxide has died out. This is the first time I have had a fire. Fire? No, a smoky chemical action in my stove. Still it has distracted me from my cold hands and cold feet. My head, however, feels the effect of the gas. I waited too long before opening the window.

I saw the Christmas numbers of Harpers and Scribners in a shop window today, but I read only Italian now. I did not purchase them but walked resolutely by.

Rome, December 15, 7:30 P.M.

This day has been spent quietly enough, seeing the common things that are usually left unseen. I began by walking down the Corso, stopping in every church on the way. It seems to me a great undertaking to choose from these gay Italian marbles the colors that will give harmony and unity of purpose. In the churches I have been in today I think the architects invariably failed. It is a delicate task, handling those pinks, yellows, and greens. Grayish white, too, cannot be haphazardly placed anywhere. And perhaps the greatest ineptitude of all is in the floors. The architects failed to realize that the floor is the ground color of the total effect. Roofs are not so much slighted, perhaps they are not so difficult. They can be coffered or painted and put in harmony with what already exists in pillars and walls. Of course I have been in none of the best churches, except the one of Saint Maria Maggiore.

I spent half the morning in S S Apostoli, sitting before the painting of Saint Anthony by Loti. I found the best place to sit was square in front of it where the light was reflected back into my eyes, giving a lustrous vagueness that concealed defects and increased the mystery of the face.

How replenishing it is, sitting in such a high arched space of ripened deep toned color with a masterpiece before you, a nucleus of thought and prophecy for the ever wandering mind to contemplate. I watched the worshippers coming, going, remaining. I thought of petty details of daily life and of far off friends, but I thought of all these things through the medium and presence of this painting, and if it is a truly holy painting I pray the worshippers may receive the asked for blessing. And that I may receive the great blessing of future hoped for friends.

Who knows how this Earthly scene will end, if it ever does end! Yet at this portion of Creation it is a mysterious experience for mankind, this living and wandering about with feelings of love and hate and beauty and then death at the end. To answer why should we all die is easy enough. But why should we live? In our optimistic hours we answer: to work, to grow. But shall we only work to work and only grow to grow, or is the Creator our goal? And why does our Creator live?

Out in the noisy streets again I realized it was well to disengage oneself from such inward speculations before being run over by some careless lout who has never questioned his own existence Yet after all neither did I question mine when I realized I was

very hungry. I went into a first class restaurant and had a bowl of excellent soup with plenty of bread for twelve cents, then went out onto the streets again, wandering.

Rome is constantly impressing me as a peculiarly new city. Boston and New York are old and faded beside it. Even Chicago shows more of the weariness of old age. With the exceptions of a ruin here and there — and ruins are merely modern conveniences for money making — the buildings of Rome are all new and fresh with the builder's lime. New houses, new streets, new public gardens — what lies are told in our American history books! Perhaps the climate and the easy renewal of stucco are in a measure answerable for this impression. Still the impression remains. Rome *was* built in a day. Look and you will see it for yourself. Look again, you will see that that day was yesterday.

A man with a trained monkey entertained me for awhile, then an impulse led me to join a passing funeral procession. A showy funeral in Rome is as vulgar as it is in America. This one was unusually pompous, some government official or church dignitary I guessed, for there was a large troop of priests and a second herd of gowned monks, all singularly repulsive with irregular sensual features, sallow

scrofulous skins and thin snuffling forms. Fascinatingly disgusting. Chant away old curmudgeons. I am glad it was not the peace of my soul depending on your intercessions.

My day ended watching the sun set behind the domes of west Rome, then supper with the porter and his wife. We had small fish, crisply fried and served whole. We took them daintily by the tails and stowed them away. They were very good, but I wished they had not died in such squirming painful contortions, for the frying of the fresh live creatures seemed to render still more painful the ways in which we find our sustenance.

Sunday, December 16, 1894 9 P.M.

Spent the morning in museums on the Capotoline Hill.

After my lunch of soup and bread at a restaurant, a delicious lunch costing only eight cents including two cents tip to the waiter, I went to the Colosseum for an hour and then up into the ruins and gardens on the Palatine Hill.

I am now so tired that I think I will not go to any galleries tomorrow. Good night, good night.

Monday, December 17, 1894 9:30 P.M.

All this morning, while in the church of San Giovanni Laterano, I thought I was looking at beautiful things. I sat a long time admiring the mosaics of the apse, saying to myself how rich and glowing the gold background was and how well it went with the bordering arabesques of blue and crimson. I wandered up and down the white lofty nave and told myself here was harmony even though it was in monochrome. Then I sat again in the colored transept and let my eyes travel from canopy to fresco and to ceiling where blue and gold and red and green all flow sympathetically to aid the wondrous pink and violet effect of the entirety. Though not my color dream, I considered it one well worth dreaming. Nor was I critical of the frescoes which were very much like colored fashion plates. I refrained from studying the paintings in detail. I wanted only to feel the glowing dawning lilac of this temple and watch the mellowing bars of sunlight through the stained glass windows banding the dusky circling incense. I wanted to join in praise of the Creator in the way praise was given in ancient times.

My worship ended, I went out into the streets again, self-satisfied. But I was all wrong. Returning

home to my roof garden where I lunched on some bread and figs, I stayed on there, reading. Later along in the afternoon when the sun was lowering and my roof garden was getting too cool to be comfortable, I went off on another walk. Chance led me outside the city walls and before I realized where I was the city was all beyond me and I found myself in the green slopes and pastures of the Roman Campagna.

There was the Tiber, shining and level, no longer between angular stone embankments but winding sinuous between green bushy banks. And everywhere lambs were bleating and frolicking in the sunset coolness and cattle were moving homeward and horses were coming in from work while others, freed for the day, were grazing and frisking gaily in the pastures.

Did I need the flowing lines of the distant hills, or the gleam of snow on the horizon's peaks, to remind me that my place of worship was here? No church with colors and music and chanting could stir the deep response that vast open cathedral evoked in me.

At dusk I returned into the busy city where throngs of dwellers were on the way to their mole-like Vespers hour.

(To be continued)

THE WAYS OUT OF BROOKLYN

M. Alberts

FTEN in sleep it was of Brooklyn that he dreamed. His mother rose before him and he would run down the steps and out of the house, dashing without any sense of direction along thoroughfares bordered by pink stucco houses and the dusty green of city trees, looking for some avenue out of his nightmare, some bridge across which he might escape from that concrete village, Brooklyn, through which the trolleys hurtled, deafening and ponderous as brontosauri. Panic always forced him awake in his lonely studio, surfacing from sleep with a trailing sensation of déja-vu, of having seen something not just for the second time but over and over as though in an endless series of mirrors.

It was years since he had last seen Brooklyn, but it was an inner landscape to which he invariably returned. He could forget none of it. The littered walks; old women hunched on folding chairs, grateful for the beneficence of the sun; and his grandmother, a

gentle slattern in broken shoes and vast torn knickerbockers. She had spent long days with him at Coney Island, walking along the boardwalk and on the shore where he balanced her beside him as she stepped unsteadily into the waves, her arms outstretched to the oily grey-green ocean as though in homage to its power. Those tepid waves carrying a mass of drowning garbage, fugitive from the mother-lode, deposited farther out by scows.

The memory of that squalor was with him still. Coney Island with its amusement park and his nausea on the giant roller-coaster called the Cyclone. The loneliness of long days and twilights on the beach, days spent with his grandmother because his father had vanished and his mother had to work.

He knew he would never leave Brooklyn behind, although he hadn't been there since his mother's death. He had tried to pass gradually out of that life, as a convalescent passes from an illness, but as after an illness, its weakness was still within him. It had left him marked as by an internal faulting, a vulnerability he otherwise might not have known. Other men he met were ashamed neither of themselves nor their origins, and for them there was no dismay nor panic when they turned towards their pasts. This seemed to him a proof of their superiority. He

watched other painters at work and it appeared to him they had a sureness in their hands which was lacking in his own. They spoke fluently of styles and trends. Sam tried to emulate them, but it was no use. Within himself he came to accept that he painted only because he couldn't stop himself from painting. Joy drew him into painting. He had no intention, as others said they had, to temper the visual world through the medium of his own eyes. He knew only that sometimes while he worked an ecstasy would come upon him, making him move about the studio, forcing his fingers through his thick hair, staggering beneath the blow of colors, and what he would feel then was like the vibration of a power liberated rather than owned. It came into his hands as though of its own volition, and by its own force lightly would raise him above his work as he imagined Turner must have risen when creating visions of the sea, morning light invading the stillness of quayside waves.

There were nights when he couldn't sleep, nights when the dreary mornings seeped in far too soon, and the shabby grey uniform he wore for his museum job hanging in the closet awaited the hour when he would put it on and go to work . . . those were the nights when he laughed and groaned aloud upon his bed, knowing what glowed there on his easel was

miraculously good. Only later he would come to the doubt, thick and frightening as nausea, that it was an illusion, that his work was mediocre and worthless. And he felt betrayed. The act of painting had carried him away, the act of making things as tactile and as passionate as the act of love.

Of the act of love itself he had little knowledge and less experience. A small shy man, he was inclined to uncertainty and awkwardness. When his friends boasted of their conquests or complained about their women, Sam envied them keenly. He was twenty-four and had engaged in a few unsuccessful fumbles.

It wasn't until he met her that he was initiated. The first time he kissed her and felt her tongue swarming into his mouth, his emotions had dazed him. Her name was Felicia. He met her at one of those huge fashionable artists' parties held in a bare chic loft that whirled for the occasion with spinning lights and earsplitting music — a party to which he had been invited by an affluent and successful painter friend. It was the night of the Chinese New Year and she had suggested they go to Chinatown together. Near dawn, to his amazement, she came pliantly to his nearby lower East Side studio. *Yes,* she had consented, *I'd love to see your paintings.*

She never even looked at them. Inside the door she

put her arms around him without a word. He couldn't remember what he had done to have her in bed with him, and he wondered if she was at all aware of the new region of joy she had opened to him.

He knew nothing of her and for weeks hesitated to tell her he earned his living as an elevator-operator in a city museum. His longing for her was unremitting, but she allowed him to see her no more often than once a week. When he asked, in his timid manner, 'Why?' she smiled coyly and replied: 'If we're together more frequently, you'll get tired of me too soon.'

When he saw her coming now through the dimly-lit semi-darkness towards the bar he shoved the envelope he was holding back into his jacket pocket. All day long he had been anticipating the moment when he would take the letter out and pass it to her to read. It was already crumpled from his handling of it. He had unfolded and read it again and again all through the past week. And this evening he had been waiting restlessly to see her.

She approached theatrically, her ribbon of rich chestnut hair and her flamboyant garments like a flowing caparison, and with her head slightly tilted back, almost as though she were astride a horse. When she arrived beside him her flesh gave off its

own odor beneath her costly perfume, an odor prescient of its own warmth and of the joy he would receive from it later.

"How are you?" she inquired as she seated herself at the bar alongside of him.

Her face was composed and remote, as though she barely knew him. He avoided her eyes. It was important to him that she never suspect how much she meant to him. He drained his vodka quickly and ordered fresh drinks. He needed the flush and haven of alcohol when he was with her.

"I thought we might go hear the gypsies," he said, relieving the silence spreading between them.

"Gypsies?" she repeated, as though making an effort to become interested.

"Yes, Polish gypsies," he said. "They're singing in a place uptown."

"*Polish* gypsies?"

"I think so, or maybe they're Roumanian. Where do gypsies come from, anyway?"

He laughed awkwardly. She didn't even smile.

"India," she said, yawning into her glass.

He decided not to show her the letter. When he had first read it himself he had experienced a sudden rush of euphoria carrying him far enough away from himself to think *I'll have to tell her.* He ignored his

awareness that what seemed to him luminous and important would appear negligible to her. He imagined them together at his first show, Felicia's arm gracefully linked with his. But this fantasy had grown so fragile that he now felt he couldn't bear exposing it to her and have her obliterate it. No, he would not show her the letter. He would not.

"Want to hear something?" he said abruptly. And drawing the letter from his pocket, he read it to her without any preamble.

"Dear Mr. Kinchin," he began. "We are pleased to inform you that your original work is under serious consideration in the semi-final competition of our annual Young Artists' Show —"

As he read he watched her obliquely, and had she bothered to look at him she would have seen his eyes betraying his emotion by an unusual brilliance and rapidity of movement as they fleetingly searched her face. Impassively she finished her drink.

"Yeah ... Well," Sam said, "let me order you another."

He signalled the bartender, then put the letter down. A ring of liquid soaked its way into the paper, blurring the ink of the signature.

"Before we go," she said, "I have something to tell you, too."

She opened her purse, drew forth something and extended it to him. Glancing at the object she held out for him to see, he admired the indigo of the cover and the elegance of the golden lettering before he realized what it was.

"Ah," he said. "A passport."

"Yes, I got it today. I'll be leaving the day after tomorrow. Flying to Paris."

He lit a cigarette, cupping his hands around the flame, composing his face. Then he said quietly:

"How nice for you."

"I have friends there to stay with awhile. Then I'll probably travel ... Pointless to remain in this city any more. It's all falling apart." She scanned his face briefly, with a momentary curiosity, then added: "There's nothing really here to hold me, anyway."

"No, of course there isn't," he answered steadily.

He concentrated on the smoke drifting from his cigarette. He felt stunned, as though someone had dealt him a heavy blow on the back, between his shoulder blades. As he struggled inwardly to maintain his outward composure, he was suddenly filled with the premonition that his painting, too, would be rejected. He didn't know why he felt this, but it came to him with an absolute certainty. *What's going to happen to me?* he wondered bleakly.

He paid their bill at the bar and they went uptown to hear the gypsies. The gypsies were Spanish. With the first clatter of high heels and the sounds of castanets and guitars her face lit with an enthusiasm that foretold her movement through distances too remote for him to envision. He realized, then, that she had already begun her journey, that she was already leaving him behind.

"Oh!" she said, turning to him, "aren't they wonderful?"

Yet later, after they returned to her apartment and had arrived at that moment of exaltation, intense and unified, Sam, leaning exhausted against her thighs, believed he had found his way beyond her resistance and beyond all defeats. It seemed to him then, in the darkness, that he meant something more to her than she acknowledged to herself.

"Don't go," he mouthed into her hair.

She didn't hear him, or perhaps pretended not to have heard him. From a leather case on a stand beside the bed she took a cigarette and lit it.

"It would be better," she said, inhaling, "if we didn't see each other again before I leave."

Why not? he thought. *Why not?* They embraced, but she continued to smoke her cigarette from behind his back. They held each other tightly, as though

what they felt for each other was very simple and the only complication was in her going away.

He returned to his apartment through the dismal pre-dawn grey of New York streets, making his way from her brownstone residence in a neighborhood of fashionable boutiques and discotheques downtown to the lower East Side where half-nude raddled matrons of Hester Street hung laundry out on lines and rats scattered as he passed them in the hallways of his building.

His studio was cold and it was too early or too late for sleep. He stood at one of the grimy windows, looking down into the street. Slowly the tide of harsh light flowed in, revealing forms to him: the shapes of tenements, the small people hunched with anxiety and cold, the cars gliding past like silent boats. He was, he knew, one of those small people, one of the ordinary men.

He donned his shabby grey uniform, glancing at himself in the mirror before he left, and the thought, as familiar as some old reflex of the body, came to him: *This is what I am. This is what could be expected to happen to me.*

Yet in the days that followed he frequently allowed himself to dismiss his premonition about his painting. 'They're going to take it,' he would whisper to him-

self while pacing the corridors of the museum or standing before the works of other artists mounted and exalted in their frames. 'They're going to take it.'

He would then become elated despite the pain of having lost her. But he became easily agitated. He drank too much, was always flushed, wept without provocation. Yet his hope persisted. 'Surely,' he muttered to himself, 'they wouldn't keep it this long if they weren't going to accept it.' And he anticipated the delivery of mail each day with a resurgence of hope, believing with a ragged faith that it would contain some message of his survival.

It was waiting for him one pale late wintry afternoon when he returned from a long day at the museum. His eyes ached, his legs and back were weary.

The envelope, oblong and of heavy vellum, stood alone in the padlocked mailbox. He removed it and tore it open before he had even unlocked his door, standing there unguarded and imperilled in the empty hall.

Dear Mr. Kinchin it began, using the same salutation as the first letter and the same signature, but now bearing a message as lethal as the passport Felicia had extended to him in the bar. *We are sorry to inform you that your painting, although arresting,*

is not among those selected for our Young Artists' Show. When can you arrange to pick it up?

He knew, despite his weeks of hope and self-deception, that he had expected it. He had expected it all: to lose her and to have his painting rejected. As he entered the long bare loft room in which he had worked alone so many nights, he cried out aloud:

"What good is it all?"

Defeat, humiliation and anger scorched his cheeks and eyes. He saw his most recent canvas on the easel at the center of the room below the skylight. He wanted to rip it from its stretchers, destroy it.

"What damned good?"

And yet when he grasped the unfinished canvas he could do nothing to maim it. He noticed a small smear of paint marring one of the upper corners and he rubbed at it gently with his thumb. Something now was rising in his stomach, some new pain bilious and green as the waves which had risen to meet his grandmother's thighs as she stepped into the sea; those waves carrying orange-peel, and fronds of newspaper as delicate as the seaweed blown inland by the wind, cups of waxed paper and sometimes even turds leached of matter and light as coral sponge.

He knew now he would never escape them, never outrun these interior images of Brooklyn. They would

be with him always, biting the edges of his heels like wild beasts in a dream. He might even go back there and walk out slowly on the sand to wait until the sun went completely down and the only lights upon the sea came from a few vessels passing far out against the coast. Perhaps it might not be so bad if he did go back to that calm sound of the sea which his grandmother had loved so well. Suddenly he longed to submit himself to Brooklyn, to give himself up to it as to a great demonic genie, something stronger than himself against which it was forbidden to struggle.

He threw the painting onto the floor.

"It's over," he said to himself.

He sat down.

"I'll give up. Learn a trade, get married, live an ordinary life."

His head throbbed and the air in the darkening studio was damp and chill. He sat quietly for awhile to fortify his resolution. Then, breaking above him like a wave — like a tidal wave carrying him along lightly above all despair — an emotion welled up in him which he knew well but for a long while had not felt. And within it the images of his grandmother's face and his mother's face looked upwards from the past.

He took off his coat, switched on the light and

placed his unfinished canvas back on the easel. And when he began again, as on other lonely nights, to paint it seemed to him that beyond the ebbing throb at his temples and beyond the plangent systole-diastole of his heart-beats he could hear within himself the vast rhythmic silences of the sea.

Dairy maids. From a contemporary Chinese wood-cut

* FURTHER NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Giles Weaver

Everywhere, Somewhere
Zip-zip, 000
Monday July 26, 1971

Dear Phoenix,

This here isn't meant to be a definitive analysis of our situation and if anybody pleases themselves to regard it as such or pleases themselves to publish it as such I will be pleased to render unto them a knuckle sandwich right in the kisser not via typewriter but with my fist, so to speak, so to speak due to the fact of the matter — that is to say, I find bloodshed a form of communication. And speaking of definitive, as anybody knows, reality is that there is only the relatively definitive, which proves that the concept of some human beings as intellectuals is a phony concept because no one uses the word "definitive" except the intellectual which proves that he is an "intellectual" or in rational language a fat-assed-ego slob since no one with brains even recognizes definitive as a word even in the concept of an implied

* *Continued from our preceding issue.*

qualifier such as "relative". Because the very idea of there being anything that even remotely resembles the definitive springs right out of the preposterous, presumptuous, pompous ignorance of the kind that is definitely universal in these people seeking security in the world of their thought processes. And speaking of bloodshed you seem to be impressed with the undesirability of physical bloodshed while I don't even bother about that, being busy as I am with being against psychological bloodshed which is what I am up against. Tyrants will prevail, therefore so will bloodshed, as long as there is any tyrannical mentality around — that is to say any human life of the planet earth type. Which proves that you are not really against bloodshed because you just prefer your tyranny on a universal small scale instead of the more conventional large scale tyrannies. Which reminds me to remark that we imagine we stand on the earth of the United States of America — ah-ha — what imaginations we all have. Where we really stand is on The Constitution of The United States of America and when that is sufficiently eroded by the war between the kookie Kooks and the kookie Anti-Kooks, we won't any of us be standing on any ground at all. Either we will be standing on cell-block concrete or slaving our asses off on the floors of munition

mills in support of various non-nuclear extravaganzas that will make the Indo-China debacle look like only the unfortunate preview of coming attractions. Which is to say that I have a minimum of sentiment for those activities which provide the kookie Anti-kook members of the establishment powers with an excuse to fuck-up and screw around with the Supreme Court and with constitutional rights — which brings us back to the aforementioned term — "conventional". That is where The Phoenix and I have a common bone of sentiment — that is to say, conventional is what we are not. Now in my expert opinion (and if you doubt that I am an expert you invite the wrath of my friend and mentor, God (yes we are together in this)) (as we earth type humans are so wont to claim) in my expert opinion it was the intention of our founding hard-assed realists to try to protect the unconventional types of people because who knows who is going to be or become or be declared just too-too. And if the too-toos aren't protected then who in hell will be eventually and therefore we were done the blessing by these men of The Constitution of The United States of America. In my expert opinion that is all we have between us and the abyss. We are blessed by the insight of people smart enough to know that what we have here on earth is a bunch

of ego-maniacs and other desirable and undesirable near-infinite capacities confined in an extremely finite situation (to make a gross understatement) and therefore creating an apparently permanently fantastically insoluable situation for the best wishes of those so afflicted which is all of us, so we go various schemes to ameliorate the hell of this tough situation — one of them being The Constitution of The United States of America and if I sound like some damn-fool flag waver it is only because we have some little choice in how we wish to be a damn fool and not being a complete damn fool that is how I choose to be a damn fool in a wave or be waved world and it is the only flag we got — flag meaning the whole bit, constitution, land, earth, skies, one's own friends, loves, hates and enemies — just like ass means the whole bit, body, mind, heart and soul.

This outburst I have written here was provoked by my contact with at the Smith College Library today when I returned the books. A pleasant encounter for me, if not for her. Unfortunately I am in some state of mania most of the time. *I* do not feel comfortable in the presence of a maniac, due to the fact, no doubt, that he is primarily concerned with his own vision of reality and with impressing it on the minds of others without real regard to their needs and

approach to life. In short, every likelihood of a gross indifference in essentials to the reality that is of core importance to his fellow human. For that is what a maniac is — a person seeking to secure himself by establishing *his* personal core as a universal truth, (therefore I can't be comfortable around The Phoenix) therefore I don't feel people can be comfortable around me, at least not for long, because I fail to suppress my mania — in fact I don't try to suppress it very much anymore because I have found it a hopeless task. Now I like and I believe that she likes me, but that doesn't make me a comfortable person for her. In fact I am not comfortable with myself except when I am uncomfortable because I should have made somebody uncomfortable and didn't because I am so uncomfortable when I make people uncomfortable; therefore I am most comfortable alone where I have only to deal with the single discomfort. It would make me comfortable to believe that The Phoenix is not comfortable with this letter. If this letter does not bother you, that does not bother me that it doesn't bother you because I know that you are kidding yourself that it doesn't bother you. I know because I am all of 5 per cent sane, which is far and away more sane than you are. Actually I am the sanest person in the whole world. You aren't

really about to accept such a preposterous proposition because if you really were smart enough to recognize that it really is true then you would publish me and become famous for your perceptiveness and audacity in publishing the first truly sane person to ever come on this earth. That is why I claim 5 per cent sanity because it is a well known fact that persons with 6 per cent sanity aren't crazy enough to even go slumming for a weekend on this earth. But I am here and obviously the only eminently rational person present. But to get on with this letter — I recognize that we are not about to tolerate each other's preposterous ideas therefore this must be the letter that I claimed I failed to write to you last year. And now that I have ventilated my ire I might drive up sometime and visit on the condition that you not resort to firearms. Let's be loving unfriends and only bad mouth each other so that we confine ourselves to psychological bloodshed — which is to say, of course, the bloodshed that is for real.

Bye now, old battle axe.
Love, *Giles*

Pee ess — if you publish this letter and change one damn spelling or punct mark or structure or phrazing you invite the rath of God, being as this is His direct

gift of gab to me. Words yet is what I will due to you, if I find a way. Take you to the cleaners in court for horse-shitting me into a greater insanity and trying to make me a pawn in your vendetta. If you want to publish a 245 IQ then publish this facsimily and you will then avoid getting carried away with your conventional ideas of what can appear on the printed page and avoid turning my sense into your nonsense.

Hate, *Giles Weaver*

Woodcut from old Phoenix files by unknown Woodstock artist.

GLIMPSES INTO AMERICA'S PRISONS

(The following interview of two ex-convicts, both of whom have pulled time at Attica, was taped live on the morning of September 13th — the grim morning of the Attica massacre. With a cheap pocket-size tape recorder and using many times erased static-crackling tape, we have had to guess at a few indecipherable words and phrases. We were unable to record the opening section of this interview which was already in progress when we tuned in on it being relayed from New York by a local FM station.)

"They've been asking for these changes for years and years and years — and it's just getting to the point now, you know, with all the political activism in the streets, that inmates are becoming more aware of the things that could be done in prison."

"Does a revolt like this require a great deal of organization? I mean it seemed, from the reports coming out from the prison yard, that the prisoners conducting the rebellion were very well disciplined. Was a lot of this going on beforehand?"

"Well you see, inside a prison it's like in the society

you have out here. We have our own code and there's certain forms and distinctions we have amongst each other. The warden — he's actually like the phantom of the opera, somebody you very seldom see. But prisons aren't run by the inmates and a riot isn't organized, as the general public is led to believe. It's not so. And in Attica what happened is that for the first time all the inmates are sticking together — black, white, polka-dot, you name it — they're all sticking together. Most of what I've heard so far from this revolt was about the welfare of the hostages. Very few people seem to be concerned with the welfare of the inmates. The officials that run these institutions are well aware of what goes on inside the prisons. Lemme see how I can put it to you — aaahh — well, when you put a guy into a drugged state you can, you know manipulate him for years and years. And that's exactly what they've been doing in there. They practically make a guy a vegetable inside the prison through the conditions of existence. And that's how they control a guy."

"How's a guy become a vegetable? It would seem in a situation like that he'd become more of an animal."

"I dunno, because — you know, they open and close the doors for you, turn on the showers for you, switch on and switch off the light for you, tell you when to

go to sleep, what movies you can see, pipe in what radio programs you should listen to, rule over what reading material you can read — everything is done without any decision of your own. You don't approach any official inside the institution. The guards don't talk to you. If they order you to move, it's with the tap of a stick. If they want you to march or stop, it's with the tap of a stick. So that's the conditions of existence and when you are put under these conditions for any length of time you become easily manipulated. That's how they kept things going for so long. But what's happening now is — you see, years ago when guys were sent to prison whatever was done to you, you took it. You never told your family what it was like inside prison because you didn't want to worry them. It was like if you did, you know, you wouldn't be a man."

"Was it bad then?"

"It was worse. You know, it was very bad. Over the years they've got some people in Correction that are more humane, but years ago, when I first started going away, it was very bad. But what's happening now is that you get more smart guys coming into prison. They're more educated and they're not taking the garbage that's handed out."

"Why have people changed like that?"

"Well they're just more educated I guess. They realize there is more to life than has been handed out to them. And I guess it's because the majority of prisoners are black and they've been handed garbage all their lives, you know. And they've reached the point where they're not going to take it any more."

"Right! And I want to make something else clear. A lot of people on the outside don't realize that when inmates riot in a prison, when they freak out like they're doing in Attica right now, people don't realize that this is really a last resort. These guys *know* they're putting their lives on the line for what are called their demands, but what are actually *pleas.* Those guys have been literally stepped on for God knows how many years. Some of those guys inside Attica have been locked up for ten, twenty or thirty years, being stepped on and stepped on. So they are really all together when something like this jumps off. And it's really kind of noble in a way, if you can understand that these cats all got together and said: *O.K. man, let's go. This is it. This is the last straw. This the last thing we're going to take. Let's* do *something!*"

"In my memory this is the first time that a prison rebellion has gotten this far. There've been a number of them like this in the past but they all ended with

the prisoners deciding to release their hostages unharmed in exchange for amnesty. But this is the first time that prisoners have said no, we're not giving up the hostages."

"What other real choice was left for them? One guard had already died from injuries received in the beginning of the riot. I don't know how that guy got hurt — he was one guard I knew — and this is going to sound kind of callous, but maybe his hand called for it."

"The guard named Quinn?"

"Yeah, right. He wasn't — well, he wasn't considered a nice guy."

"The authorities said he was thrown out of a second floor window."

"Yes but I don't see how he could have been. You can't be thrown out of a window in Attica because they all have bars on, you know. It's impossible. And there are no second floor windows in Attica. I spent a year there, you know, and I'm pretty familiar with that place. Anyway, I want to go back to where I was trying to explain to you before, when you asked me about the organization amongst the inmates. While I was in there, and until I got released this past June, there was no organization. There was like different factions. You know, there was the political rhetoric

of the Black Panthers and there was the religious thing of Muslims and the Puerto Ricans had their Young Lords and, you know, everyone was kind of apart, yet together. Everybody knew what was needed in prison. All the inmates knew all the ills. But nobody was ready, or in fact able, to like band together and go for the common cause. And I don't think the taking of hostages was planned, like a tactic. As I understand it, it all happened spontaneously. It started — from what I've been told — as just another sit-down strike."

"Right. What I heard was that an inmate got into some kind of altercation with a guard and he was taken into segregation and jacked up and the word went around that he had got a real bad beating. He was a guy who had quite a few friends in the yard. He was a popular guy in the joint and the inmates strongly resented his punishment. A good friend of his was very vocal about it, so the guards grabbed him too. The inmates then went into a sit-down strike. They wanted these two guys released from solitary confinement. That's what I was told of the way it all started."

"And there's another point I want to bring in. They had a riot in Auburn last October and the authorities promised the inmates amnesty to restore order. But

the last thing I knew in June when I left Attica, there was guys still locked up in solitary in Auburn. And I'm not even talking about the guys they sent to trial, the guys the authorities indicted for the riot, I'm talking about other guys who weren't brought up on criminal charges in front of a jury — the guys who got *inside* punishment from prison officials — and they were still locked up in solitary eight months later, man. And *all* the inmates in Auburn were promised amnesty. That's the way the authorities keep their promises."

"You know, before we go any further and while we're talking about prison officials' reprisals — I don't know how we can do it, or even if it can be done — but somebody should go up there to Attica and act as an observer, because after the shooting stops today and after the inmates are locked in their cells, the blood bath that's going to go on inside that prison is going to be unbelievable. I'm talking about what the prison officials are going to be doing in there. I've been in riots and I know exactly what's going to happen. It's — it's going to be very bad."

"Yeah, that's for sure. Some of the guys from Fortune Society, Dave Rothenburg and two other guys — Mel Rivers and Kenny Jackson — were up to Attica on Saturday and Kenny told me, just a little

while ago, that the guards who were outside the prison, you know, the guards who weren't on duty when the riot and cell-block takeover happened, they were saying that they were terrified of going back in there again. So man, there's really going to be reprisals. And the reprisals are going to come from those guards. Those guards are terrified. They're most of them functional illiterates. You know, in order to take a job like that you just can't be too together anyway."

"What about the inmates' demand for dismissal of the warden? I've heard before, from people who were inmates of Attica, that the warden is not popular there. He has been petitioned futilely a number of times for most of the same demands Commissioner Oswald belatedly was willing to grant. Have either of you had any experience with that warden?"

"Yeah but you know in a situation like this the authorities will have a show of solidarity with all of the prison officials. It may be that when all this quiets down the warden will be removed from there because he's not too together himself. But this is not the — you know, if you look a little further from what has happened here, the bloodshed and everything, if you just look at the inmates' thirty demands, twenty-eight of which Commissioner Oswald was willing to ac-

cept, if you look at these demands you'll see that three-fourths of them was for better conditions *inside* the prison: better food, better living quarters, better education, better medical care. And that's what I was trying to tell you before — how they control the inmates by manipulating them and by reducing them into vegetables. So the inmates' chief concern is about how to stay alive as *men* while they are within the prisons. And our concern, through The Fortune Society, is how to help them when they get outside again. We feel that the way prisons are today and *why* there was a riot in Attica is because of what they do to men inside the prisons. And because of what they do to men, many guys when they're released are unable to function in the outer society."

"Let's talk, then, a little about conditions inside the prisons. From the list of demands it seems that almost every conceivable part of Attica prison needs improvement. Could you focus on a few of the demands, let's say on food and medical care, and tell us just how it was in there?"

"Well I'll give you a concrete example of food. I guess I can give you one instance and it will just about cover it all. There was a time — and on my last bit I did fourteen years before I was released on parole from a twenty year sentence — there was a

time, for about six years, that we had kidney stew every Thursday. Week after week, year after year for almost six years, that was it. Kidney stew for the Thursday menu. And if there was twelve guys out of over two thousand who ate that kidney stew, that'd be a lot. But we continuously got it, *every Thursday,* week after week, year after year. For the simple reason that the stew, instead of being thrown out, was fed to the pigs. They had a very large pig farm and this stew was cooked *solely* for the pigs. Because nobody, except a dozen guys or less, ever ate it. And they would feed the pigs for three days with what should have been an edible meal they were supposed to be giving to us. It was cooked every week and you could smell urine from that stew all through the prison. The stench of that stew pervaded the whole place for three or four days. And that's typical of the kind of food you'd be given."

"Yeah, and there were other things like rotten beans and stuff that was like — you know, that nobody would eat. And there was another kind of stew they laid on you every week that nobody picked up. Or even better they had some kind of stinking hash — I don't know what was in it — but nobody picked up on it. And you would think that after awhile they would kind of get the message, you know, nobody's

picking up on this thing, why don't you, you know, change the menu. Another thing that I think should be brought out is the way the menu is written up — it's really a masterpiece. If you looked at the menu that's put out by the dietitian, boy it looks gorgeous. You know, they have like ham steak with gravy, candied yams and a whole list of stuff and it looks like, you know, like you get in a restaurant. Wow, it all looks really together. But when you sit down to eat it, it's, you know, it's not prepared at all properly and it's not got any of the glory it had on the menu. And you gotta remember guys are like forced to eat this stuff. I remember one of the demands was that less pork be served. We got pork, when I was there at Attica during the past year, we got pork one way or another every day. You got either frankfurters or you got sausage or you got hash. Every day you got some form of pork. And a lot of the black guys, of course, don't eat pork. And a lot of the other guys are sick of it."

"How about fresh fruit? That was another thing mentioned in their list of demands."

"Yeah when I was there in Attica, for awhile they ran some fresh fruit. Like they give you an orange every Sunday and —"

"Sure, to stop scurvy."

"Right. And that was it for fresh fruit. Then for a short while, for some strange reason every Thursday we were getting half a grape-fruit, but they stopped that — I don't know why."

"Because they had apples to sell in the commissary."

"Yeah you're right, that's most likely why. A great deal of their menus are predicated on what the commissary has to sell. You know, it's funny, it's like a vicious circle. They pay out money for inmate labor and they don't pay very much, about a quarter a day. And you have only one place to spend it and that's in the prison commissary. So if they feed you bad one week, or if the menu comes out a couple of days ahead of time and you can see on it that you're going to get more rotten beans and you're going to get more pork sausage and you're going to get more of that stinking hash or other things a lot of guys don't eat — then you know they're going to rake in heavy at their commissary."

"Weeks like that they always have a heavy traffic at their commissary. But look at typical meals the guys do eat. On a Friday night it's a scoop of rice, plain boiled rice, along with a half a bowl of milk, tea without sugar and four slices of bread. That's your meal on a Friday night, every Friday. On Sunday you got a bowl of soup, four slices of bread and tea with-

out milk or sugar. That was our Sunday meal. Every Sunday we got that. And every Friday we got that bowl of rice, nothing in it."

"And on Saturday nights they have a steady thing. You get a bowl of hot rice pudding. And that's it. The main meal. Not a side dish or dessert. The main meal. Just hot rice pudding."

"And for guys putting out state license plates or working in the tobacco shop all day long, when they sit down to meals like that, you know, it's not really very nourishing at all."

"Let me tell you about something else — the showers."

"Oh that's a groovy one. They line you up, you know, forty-two guys because there's forty-two men in a gallery, and they march you to the showers. And what happens is — they have no cubicles, no separate shower stalls, you know, just pipes hanging from the ceiling with spray nozzles and there's forty-two guys getting undressed and standing there. And whenever the guard figures you're ready he turns the water on and whatever comes out — hot, cold, lukewarm — you got it."

"Another thing is you only get a shower once a week. That's not so bad for guys who are sick, you know, the invalids, which is maybe two hundred guys

or maybe one hundred guys in the entire institution. But there's twenty-five hundred other guys who work. And most of them are working at pretty dirty jobs. Like the guys who work in the metal shop. Those guys work, you know, with heavy metal plating in a sheet metal plant and they get paint and grease and all kinds of stuff on them. And once a week they get a shower."

"We could go on like this forever."

"Yeah . . . yeah."

"What I'd like to do at this point is to invite the people who are listening to join us in this discussion. If you have any information you'd like to add, or any questions you'd like to ask our guests, feel free to call up and join us in this discussion. The number is 371-5200 in New York. And while waiting for the calls I'd like to ask your reactions to a comment that was made this morning by the Chairman of the Board of Corrections in New York State. He said two things that might be worth discussing. One was that this whole incident might set back the course of prison reform for decades. And the other comment he made was that he was afraid this disturbance in Attica might spread to other institutions around the country."

"Well as far as the second point is concerned, I'm surprised that other institutions haven't gone out as

yet. But as for setting back penal reform a hundred years, I don't know. You know, most of the comments I've heard coming out of this thing is that it's a black revolution, or a black and Puerto Rican revolution. This Kunstler that was up there, he keeps insisting, he keeps saying that he hopes the black community and the Puerto Rican community doesn't forget this day. And you know, it's *not* a black and it's *not* a Puerto Rican uprising you have inside Attica prison — it's the *unified* inmate population that's fed up with the conditions that they have to exist under, you know, this *hopelessness* that they really have to survive under — black, white and polka dot. It's not a *black* revolution and it's not a *Puerto Rican* revolution. When statements like this are made, you know, it really gets to me because they *are* all together in there — black, white and polka dot."

"John — and you're both white I should add to the audience who can't see you — how big a white population is there in Attica?"

"It's pretty small. Out of twenty-five hundred of the total population I think there's perhaps three hundred whites right now. Maybe a little more or a little less, I really don't have the figure. But I want to comment on this thing of setting penal reform back twenty years, or whatever number of decades. One of the

things about penal reform is that it's all been going on behind closed doors up until this point. And except for *The Fortune Society* and a couple of other groups like that, none of the general public knows what really goes on behind the walls of a prison. Now that's one of the reasons why these guys are doing this, or why they did this."

"Yeah and anyway, how far *back* can they go?"

"Right! As it is we're back to the fourteen hundreds, to the Dark Ages as far as penal reform goes. The only thing they might go back to is the whipping post and to —"

"Breaking rocks."

"Yeah, and to dungeons and stuff like that. But if the Attica revolt should not do anything more but to bring us forward to *at least* revealing to the general public — although right now their reaction is going to be, you know, lock the doors and all that kind of stuff. But eventually some people are going to start realizing: well maybe we *should* do something in there, maybe there *is* something wrong in there, something *radically* wrong. And eventually — hopefully — people are going to start looking at it, you know, in the *light* of reality. You know: well Jeez, we're supposed to be reasonable in taking these guys into there, but what we're really doing is nothing except

revenge, and revenge is not going to make him a good guy when he comes out."

"I've received a news bulletin to relay to our audience. A demonstration has been called for this afternoon by a whole host of groups including the *Prisoners Solidarity Committee, Angela Davis Defense Committee, Harrisburg Defense Committee, Peoples Coalition for Peace and Justice, Episcopal Peace Fellowship, Catholic Peace Fellowship, Vietnam Veterans Against the War* and *Young Lords Party.* Demonstration outside of Governor Rockefeller's home at 22 West 55th Street here in New York City at five P.M. And repeating an earlier bulletin already issued, the State announced that Attica prison, after five hours of fighting, is now completely under police control. This is WBAI in New York City."

EDITORIAL NOTE

Toward the middle of this month, as we neared the last sections of this badly delayed issue, the Attica uprising flared forth from the depths of suffering in America — in the prisons where the secret cruelties of sadists and racists, in high office and low, find legal victims for their hatred of man's worth. We followed the course of the uprising intensely.

On the evening of the day of the government's massacre we tried to express our sympathy and unity with our battered brothers in Attica but everything we wrote seemed inadequate. We struggled several weeks over it but we found ourselves incapable of transposing our agitated thoughts and feelings into words.

Now in absent-minded moments, when the day's distractions fade, their faces which we stared at on TV during the negotiations suddenly are all around, *so close*, staring at us mysteriously through the bars of their prison cells. And at night their presences crowd against our hearts as we make our way through them into sleep.

Meanwhile behind the rising hollow clamor over the next presidential election which will never take place and as the war in Vietnam is phased out, the internal war against the discarded poor and unem-

ployed intensifies. And a wage freeze is launched against the workers in the corporation-owned harvest fields and assembly lines. "Let me say the unsayable," says Agnew, as he entertains the assembled Governors of America in their posh hotel of plundered Puerto Rico on the very day of the assault and massacre at Attica. "Rising corporate profits are good for the average man and are needed more than ever by the poor."

But their show is over and they know it and every hour they grow more paranoic. Their sleep must be infested now with dreams of rocket escapes to the Moon. For what happened in Attica is the most certain omen of their demise. All the walls of all the prisons will soon come tumbling down. How we will find our way through the ensuing chaos is unforseeable. But what now is most clearly visible, splashed in blood in Attica, is the central collapse of American tyranny. Its reign is shattered when, under the deepest pressures of prolonged suffering, the spirits of men blaze with diamond clarity as they make their way in unity through all the false primal fears and divisions and hatreds right on — through the ancient curse & fear of Death itself — to freedom. O! beloved brothers of Attica you have refreshed our souls. *J.C.*

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Leo Archer is a dual pseudonym.

Barbara Holland has been published in many little mags. She gives readings in libraries, coffee houses, church halls, lofts & cafeterias in New York City. A resident of the Village, she lives on Morton Street.

Martin Steingesser, whose poems have appeared in *Unicorn Folio*, *New Measure* & *Trace*, is a young free-lance journalist and works with the News Bureau of New York University. He lives on Bedford Street in Greenwich Village.

Jacques Hnizdovsky, an internationally known artist, has won special acclaim for his woodcuts. Born in the Ukraine, he studied in Europe. He came to the United States in 1949 and since then has lived in this country. Among the many exhibitions in which his prints have been represented are the American Graphic Exhibition in Tokyo & the Graphics Art Exhibit in the USSR. In the past five years he has had five one-man shows in Paris, London and New York.

Robert Hinckley, a drop-out from the academic scene,

taught Economics at the University of Massachusetts until last Spring. *Communion* is his first published poem. The following is from a recent letter of his:

"The poem was written in May 1969 on my 34th birthday as a result of an experience I had as I was hiking along the path going to the top of Mount Toby. It was the first mystical experience I had since I was a youth. In a way it was the initial step in the unfolding of my spiritual consciousness and the prelude to the whole period of my life I am now in. At present Suzy and I have joined a newly forming commune in southwest Oregon. It is located in a small beautiful valley way out in the woods. A small river goes through the valley which is surrounded by heavily wooded hills. The sea fog comes and goes, at night you can see a million stars, and deer, elk, herons and geese share this peaceful abode with us.

"We are building a small shack out of old wood. Our days are spent farming, forming a community, and getting ready for winter. The commune is unified around a common sense of spirituality we all have. Every day I meditate and do yoga. The commune is not without problems, but thus far I have found peace, joy, strength, and a feeling of worthiness from being here. I doubt I will ever return to academic life. I find this simple, open, honest life, living closely with

other people, more to my liking than the complexities of academic life. All our love."

M. Trap is the pseudonym of a new young poet. Her poems in this issue are the first of her work to be published. She wrote to us:

"The pseudonym I picked out for my work goes with the fictive cycle I am working on. At present I am not far into it and can only attribute this to despair. I do not see many people and from time to time get down and won't work. But my last few poems are the result of putting despair down and trying to cope with the struggle. Kafka's *Description of a Struggle* which Borges included in *The Book Of Imaginary Beings* is about what I'm contending with but only in that mythical creative sense. That is, the parachute poems are about my struggle with my psyche and the hallucinations, and the selves I have encountered in those hallucinations. These are not from drugs but from too deep and too singular a loneliness. That is, losing people over and over again, I came to feel that parts of my self were lost and I could only get those parts back by identifying and creating in a sense the songs or sculptures or interviews these celebrities gave out. I did not know these celebrities personally but meeting them impersonally in the papers or at concerts or museums they take

on the faces and personalities of the people I lost and the parts of myself I lost. I hope that makes sense to you.

"I think something of all of us longs to be glamorous. That is we long for the power, the attention, the seemingly easy and uncostly freedom the glamorous ones radiate, and the other things that come to stars and superstars, and, indeed, more than likely to creative people. I think a number of murders are committed to gain these things. I think a number of frustrations occur because of the apparent inequality of attention, etc. I think also some of these personalities may take on the roles of mothers and fathers to us or even our other self. So, I say a Sirhan or an Oswald kill their other selves they can never be; doppleganger; or kill the person who comes to be their father or mother. Hence the psychiatrist saying Sirhan killed his father in the person of Bobby Kennedy. And I think, but I am just now 'on' to this and don't have a clear picture of what it means, but, anyway, I think the disappearance of certain species of life threatens us internally too and mostly we feel it is the female that is disappearing. I am just now reading Auden's commonplace book, *A Certain World*, and came across a quote that fits this: '*Men* are men, but *Man* is women.' G. K. Chesterton said that.

"I have a long poem called *Buffy Ste. Marie Songs* that isn't finished yet and this is what I was trying to say. It goes into the disappearance of the buffalo (what will you do now that the buffalo's gone, etc.) and this relates to all the other parts of our selves that are disappearing in our own forms (human) and in animal and tree and plant life. You see, I think there are a number of ways to be violent. Whether it is cutting trees down recklessly or killing endless buffaloes, we have met our selves again and again and either come to terms with it or killed it. The idea that seeing the tiger for the first time we know it because it is in us. The will making itself a single essence — tiger and human being.

"I have enclosed another parachute poem that I thought you might like. I know I get no money and it is all right. I also enclose a check for a year's subscription as I enjoyed the poetry signatures you sent me. I particularly like Ray YoungBear's *Painted Visions*. Thanks."

Charles Buchanan of Hoboken hangs out with his uncle, Joe Trincellita, a fine conversationalist, superb drinker and brilliant handicapper. His story in these pages is his first published work. His father was Scotch and his mother Italian.

Mimi Alberts is a young writer currently teaching

at Brooklyn College in New York, and she has been published in various little magazines in this country and in England.

Giles Weaver is the pseudonym of a writer whose self-portrait appeared in our previous issue. We hope he will change his mind and let us continue publishing his contemporary diary.

Hervey White was born in New London, Iowa in 1866. He graduated from Harvard in 1894 and travelled through Italy where he kept the unpublished diary now appearing in these pages. His first novel *Differences* was published by Small Maynard, of Boston, in 1899. His next novel *Quicksand* was published by Small Maynard in 1900 and in the same year his publishers issued his third novel *When Eve Was Not Created*. Theodore Dreiser, writing of these early works, said: "And our American *Quicksand*, by Hervey White, I consider among the six great novels of the world."

Dreiser had ample time to reconsider this judgement several decades later when writing a piece titled "The Great American Novel" which appeared in *The American Spectator* of December, 1932. But in this and another later article he reiterated his belief that Hervey White was one of the obscure great writers of America.

After returning from Italy and Europe by way of England, Hervey White went to Chicago to take up literature as a profession. There he had a furniture work-shop, the writing of his early novels, a job at a library to provide for his food and shelter and in addition to all this — settlement work. Many other critics besides Dreiser praised his first three novels. But they never reached the best seller list. His publishers were willing to go on with the bringing out of his work if he would write novels with happy endings, but Hervey White did not care to make the suggested changes. So for quite a few years his work ceased finding its way into print.

It was during this period, in the early 1900's, that Hervey White met Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead, a wealthy young Englishman enthused with the Arts and Crafts movement then flourishing in England. Whitehead was just recently out of Oxford and had been a pupil of Ruskin's. Painting, literature, music, theatre and the crafts were the things his mind was full of. He was not creative himself but he wanted to associate with those who were. He had a magnificent estate in California, high in the mountains and overlooking the sea only a mile away. There Hervey White went as an invited guest and the idea germinated of founding a colony of artists enabled to sus-

tain themselves by allied crafts — pottery, weaving, and simple articles of furniture.

Whitehead thought the sea-coast mountains of California would provide an ideal location, but Hervey White felt that an arts and crafts colony would need the proximity of a major cosmopolitan city and he was convinced that New York would provide a favorable cultural marketplace. The two young men came East and met Bolton Brown, a collector of prints. Mountains for the colony were a prerequisite for Whitehead and the Catskills seemed the nearest to New York City. The side of Overlook Mountain looking down over the village of Woodstock was chosen as the site.

So Woodstock was founded as a colony which in Whitehead's vision would take its place along with such localities as Sevres, Barbizon, Bayreuth & Kelmscott. As centers of the Arts and Crafts movement which soon faded away all but Kelmscott, of those places, seem now to be forgotten, while Woodstock, in another way, is still a magnetic place. Byrdcliffe was the name Whitehead gave to the colony in 1902. Hervey White worked with him for two years, then withdrew. Through the village of Woodstock he went and down the road a few miles to a low-priced farm of several hundred acres which he had made

arrangements to purchase with a small down payment and a long-term mortgage. There, separated from Byrdcliffe by the Ohio Mountain and the village of Woodstock, he set about building a simple cabin for his family of two infant sons and his young wife. He rented the farmhouse to a musician, a cellist named Horace Butt, to be assured of meeting his monthly mortgage payment.

Hervey White called his place The Maverick. He had no funds for founding a colony, but in the years that followed he extended the privilege to other young writers and painters and musicians of building their houses on his land.

During these early years at Woodstock none of Hervey White's writings were published. And it was in order that his work might be printed as he wrote it, and with some hope that he might earn something from his books, that he set up his press — *The Maverick Press* — in 1908. He decided to start a little magazine, *The Wild Hawk*, in which his work could appear serially and which he thought would be easier to launch forth. *The Wild Hawk* was one of the earliest of the "literary freedom" periodicals and was begun in 1911.

(These notes on Hervey White will be continued in our next issue.)

CORRESPONDENCE SECTION

The Phoenix flew in, on strong wings. One could wish that all resurrections might be as splendid. I congratulate you. Print, form and contents, a fine piece of work. Jean Giono — is there any chance you could publish his *Refusal To Obey* in its entirety as a book in this translation, in the near future? A great writer, too much.

Do you know Robert Bly? I met him at the D. H. Lawrence Festival and instantly liked him. There was no time to talk and I had no transportation to meet with the group in town at night. So I did not find out much about him, just liked him. He clowned a lot when people and speeches became too pedantic and stuffy, which was a relief. His clowning was good, pointed. I wonder about him, what he is like when you know him.

I liked the Festival. It was not *really* very good by itself, but for me it was good, meeting so many of the men with whom I have been in correspondence while they tried desperately to tap my memories — Delavenay, Moore, Roberts, Sagar. But of course I did not 'belong' there. My connection with Lawrence is quite different. I *lived* those days, grew up with

them — they are part of me and of my history. Just as one is aware of the *pattern* of what has happened in one's life without emphasis on when it took place, so I feel about the Lawrence days. There was no emotional involvement, as there was with Alice Dax, Jessie Chambers, Louise, Helen and the rest.

When it was my turn to speak at the Festival I realized that really I had nothing to say to these people that they would understand or appreciate. So I scrapped the material I had prepared and spoke off the cuff, light stuff. If ever I write of those days I spent in Lawrence's company there will be no exact dates or placing of events. I never realized the significance of the events until I was in my late teens. It was good to see David Garnett again. Such a long time, but he is not easily forgotten.

Strange how all the biographers write about Lawrence. They get him from his books, but he isn't there fully. More in the poems I think. Helen Corke gave a good portrait, but even she missed the *fun*. Could it be that he never showed that aspect of himself to the lovers?

My D. H. Lawrence material is still in the thought stage. If once I can start I think it will go, but starting is the problem. So much is in my mind — memories stirring around — but they are chaotic at

present. Anything that I can produce will be of the simple variety. After all at the age when I knew 'Bert' best I was very young and the central impression I retain is of a gentle and delightful man far removed from the 'tortured' genius usually presented by the scholars. I saw that side too, but because I did not *want* to see it, the impression was not deep. Also, I was not amongst the women involved in his life. That is why I feel a more simple picture of the man may be valuable — an evocation of the *fun* he had and created, and of the evenings in *Mountain Cottage* with Frieda at the piano and all of us singing in the candlelight, and the deep cool valley below the cottage, blue in the moonlight. And he tried so hard to launch me, a cramped, crude, inhibited child, into the wide world and into the potential that was me, once released.

Then there was the visit to them in Italy, at the *Mirenda Villa* at the time of the publishing of Lady Chatterly. Pino came to the villa and plans were hatched for the delivery of copies to England, getting them across the customs. My husband and I smuggled many copies, hidden about us & wrapped in old clothes, and I delivered them to their rightful recipients. Then followed a long stream of copies mailed to us, one or two at a time, and hidden in

our apartment until we personally delivered them. I don't think that episode is known.

And I was there at the raid of the London 'gallery' displaying his paintings. I was sent hastening down a back staircase to take messages to concerned friends. The Warrens were so upset, not for themselves, but for the fate of the paintings. I had purchased one — *The Firedance* — but that was confiscated too.

It's all so long ago and far away in meaning. How interesting it is now, who can tell? But it is all an authentic aspect of Lawrence and of a stage of history that is of importance. That is why I feel it should be recorded.

I knew Alice Dax — Clara of *Sons and Lovers* — very well. I may still have some of her letters, though all my notes and the early letters were burned in the total fire of my place in Lake County, California, in 1945 or '46, I forget which.

Anyway, my memories would be a sort of child's eye view of Lawrence, without the fire, brimstone and torture of so many other accounts. I was not of his generation and I have rather naive and uncomplicated memories of Lawrence beginning from when he was 16 — when I was only 5. I did not know Jessie Chambers, but was intimately connected with Alice Dax. I knew Kot and Katherine Mansfield, Arabella

York and the Big Ones of his early days. I also knew Edward Carpenter very well. But so far I have been absolutely destitute of writing ability and my mind has boggled. Unrest within myself and a great deal of frustration have firmly stomped on my memories. Yet it would be best to hurry or else my memories — for what they are worth to posterity — will be buried with me in a common uncomfortable grave!

The world daily grows more frightening. Even in this small California town it is all around, the acrid smell of fear. And in this state Ronnie baby is trying to straighten out his and others' mistakes by squeezing blood out of the bloodless aged and out of the very young. It is easy that way — there is no fight back. I am thankful you have creative ways to contend with the violence and corruption. *The Phoenix* is needed.

Still working with and for the Indians. It is not essentially what I want to do and it takes time. But here I am, involved in it, so here I stay, for the time being, until my thoughts become clarified.

Meanwhile, Indian Summer Programs are beginning to crowd in. I do not like the available camps — the only inspired one was closed last year — but I work on the possibly mistaken theory that they are better than nothing. And the children are charming.

While I think of it, which city is near you — that is, how does one get to you from here, say by Greyhound bus? I shall have to take the New York service but do not know the stopping points served by both the main line bus *and* the local one to your northwestern corner of Massachusetts. Tomorrow, before mailing this letter I shall try to obtain a route map from the local bus depot. That might give an indicator of the main line stopping places.

My God, but you have a lovely group. All so alively handsome. Wish I knew each one of them. Love to all of you. Sometimes I think of the strangeness of our friendship. We knew each other so briefly and yet I have always felt close to you all through the years and the intervals of long silences. In many ways I have mismanaged my life shockingly, partly through ignorance and a little through a fear bred of loneliness. In America a lone person is terribly lone. But I have had fun making my mistakes and the funny side of things sees one through.

Enid Hilton
Ukiah, California

since i received your letter i have been at full heart trying to decode the name of whoever wrote to me

and it has been unsuccessful, so that leaves me baffled, but i will write anyway.

when do you think the next issue will be out? i would like to send you some poems, but for the present i'm sending everything i write to the *south dakota review* -- the editor, j. milton, wanted a large assortment of my poems. so, i've been grinding my heart into each piece of word with some hard times attached to each sentence as well as good.

i'm fascinated by the giles weaver piece. people have been telling me it is a far-out thing to read when one is stoned, but i think they mean more than just that. well, scheme well.

ray youngbear
Pomona College, California

We are grateful for your generous offer to carry this notice in your journal. *The Wilmington Bail Committee* was founded nearly three years ago, toward the end of the ten month period of occupation by the National Guard of the black ghetto in Wilmington, Delaware. The intent then, as now, was to provide bail for poor persons arrested while attempting to bring about social change.

An amount of $20,000 in property deeds, which may be used as bail security, has been accumulated.

In addition we have had varying amounts of cash reserves — now all used up — for emergency purposes. During the past three years the bail committee, working directly with ghetto advisors, has used these deeds and cash to provide $200,000 worth of bail for many individuals who otherwise would have been in prison for months awaiting trial.

There still exists in Delaware a desperate need for bail. The cruel prison situation here, as elsewhere in the nation, underscores the inhumanity of an unequal system which requires that the poor be ransomed like slaves.

We are private citizens who wish to see ultimate changes in our system of justice. We believe that bail is a glaring example of the inequities in a legal system that favors the rich and persecutes the poor.

We have exhausted all cash reserves. We cannot continue without cash backing. Please send contributions to:

Ruth Kolber, Acting Chairman
Wilmington Bail Committee
4th & West Streets
Wilmington, Delaware

P.S. If you wish to explore the possibilities for a bail project in your community, please write. We will be happy to provide additional details and share ideas.

The Phoenix is very impressive. Many of our friends in Viet Nam are artists, poets and writers but it would be very difficult for you to be in direct communication with them. And there are so *few* Vietnamese works that have been translated into English (please see Unicorn Journal 3).

We are looking forward to be in close touch with you. We send you our sentiments les plus chalereux! Long live *The Phoenix.*

Vo-Dinh
Editor of *Lotus*
Box 163 Matamoras
Pennsylvania 18336

The poet Eugene Ruggles came to my primitive house last evening bearing in his outstretched hands the newly risen *Phoenix.* We marvelled at its second birth. Mahler rose up from the woods as herald.

You may not have heard of Eugene Ruggles. He is a poet known by all other poets of the San Francisco area not because he has been published widely, but because he was the organizer of two poetry readings which were done as benefits for the Indians occupying Alcatraz Island. He raised something like two thousand for them with two readings. They were five-hour readings with most San Francisco poets par-

ticipating. Gene intends to send you some of his poems but he has trouble doing such things as typing manuscripts and getting them in the mail.

For the enclosed check please list me for a year's subscription starting with your reappearance issue.

Neal Metcalf
Bodega, California

Tom McGrath let me borrow your two-volume facsimile reprint edition and I was shocked and joyed by what you have published. Cannot Jean Giono's *Refusal To Obey* be made available by you in book form? My best wishes to you in this long night of human defeats. When the sun begins to break through I would like to shake your hand.

David Martinson
Moorhead State College
Moorhead, Minnesota

our copy of the reappearance issue of *The Phoenix* is already well worn from many readings. we all rejoiced the day it arrived several weeks ago. now it keeps passing from hand to hand — no, heart to heart.

there are so many things to say, reading the works you chose to print. all the patient setting of type by

hand, letter by letter — the first signature off the press — the joys of a completed issue. We share this kind of life with you.

we envy your life-style, fulfilled in a way not possible here in santa barbara, riviera of the affluent. but things are well with us. we are working hard and we love you. we have two new additions to our staff — antonio and danci — and now seven of us share in our work here, with evening readings by authors, the most recent being teo's new novel *To A High Place* which we'll be hand-setting, printing & binding ourselves this summer along with another novel of prison experiences *The Cell* translated from the german. and many more, including reprinting *The Cry of Vietnam,* a work of love.

we are seriously considering moving to a rural environment and setting up a real community of gardening and book-making next spring. there are *many* serious questions involved in deciding — and then doing it — and i pray it becomes possible for us in these days of centralized technological man to make a self-supporting arts and crafts community.

teo has been working on the *Journal* which we hope to publish in the fall. rudy is away for a needed two week vacation in oregon. it has been six months since he refused to register for the draft and he will

sometime, most likely soon, be indicted in los angeles. i am sleeping in a garage and sharing a friend's house next to it — we have a great organic garden which is doing well but needs much attention. also i've begun playing the piano again which brings me great joy.

we think and speak of you often — even when you don't hear from us. love from everyone here.

patti, Unicorn Press
Santa Barbara, California

It's not that your intentions in *The Phoenix* are at all different or grander than many other publications around. Part of it for me, I suppose, is how I ran across it.

I teach high school English, but last night I called in for a day of leave and today I came to Seattle's University of Washington with my husband — he works mornings here in shipping and receiving in the library, opening mail, so that he can write and print and paint in the afternoons and evenings. I drifted around for an hour or so looking at various books and trying to figure out what it was I was trying to get at again, then went to the periodical publications room to leaf through the poetry mags, looking for names and places I knew.

With a normal amount of vanity I refound the journals containing my husband's poetry & my articles and reread them all with the usual pleasure. *Poetry* begins with *P* and so, obviously, does *Phoenix.* Partly the name, partly the look of the cover, partly something else caught my attention. It was eye-level on the shelf — maybe that was all of it. Whatever it was, I found all that I was looking for inside the pages.

I respond first emotionally to the tone of something and then intellectually to the ideas presented. Everything about the tone of *The Phoenix* was of a kind, from the opening salutation to Jean Giono on through to the editorial statements, letters and photos at the end.

It was very strange too because I had just received a letter from William Stafford concerning an article recently published about his work which I had written some time ago. He was my first English professor at Lewis and Clark back when I started college and he has remained a friend and source of encouragement ever since.

And then to read that you had published Brother Antoninus when he was known as William Everson in your earlier issues during the late thirties was also a startling discovery. William Stafford often spoke

of him as a fellow pacifist and I have always admired his poetry.

When I was doing my work for my M.A. on Dylan Thomas and modern criticism I found articles by two others of your past contributors — Raynor Heppenstall and Kay Boyle — most helpful. So their letters, both old and new, in your reappearance issue were meaningful discoveries for me in a personal sense.

My husband's poetry has been consistently rejected by Robert Bly but with the rejections he always includes very helpful criticism and comments which have indicated to us that he is one to respect and admire.

And the letter from Allan Safarik was especially interesting to me. We have noted poems of his published in local periodicals and little mags and to see that he has been corresponding with you was yet another surprise. All in all, I feel refreshed and encouraged.

Enclosed you will find our current flyer announcing our forthcoming collection of lyric poetry. We have been receiving good results so far and are still welcoming contributions from poets. If you know any poets in your area who might be interested, please pass our address on.

As you probably have heard, Seattle and all of the

state of Washington is very depressed right now. Boeing is all but shutting down completely and the result has been immediate. Many of our friends are out of work and future prospects look grim. So far we still eat, but one never knows for how long.

We found an old Chandler & Price platen press which had been stored in a sculptor's workshop for over 10 years. We took it apart on weekends and with the help of a friend finally got it into our basement & cleaned up and reassembled. Our hopes are great, but time will tell.

Enclosed please find our check for a year's subscription. We wish we could afford your two-volume facsimile reprint edition of all your past issues, but we can't. I will be sending you another $7.00 next month to pay for a subscription for our good friends, Judith and Ray Boggs in Boston. He is currently waiting out the draft board's decision on his C.O. application and they would really be encouraged to know that you are back on the scene with *The Phoenix.*

Karen & John Sollid & Kristen
P.O. Box 15319 Wedgewood Station
Seattle, Washington 98115

I just received the new *Phoenix.* What a creation! The insane years since your last issue in 1940 have

been transcended. You know, Anais Nin says she published her *Diary* because she felt that some of the spirit of the thirties and the people who wrote then is being manifested in the young of our times. Promethean faith *is* needed, for we are at the beginning of some cataclysmic upheaval, some great change.

Glimpses of our Distaff bowled me over. What a beautiful sense of humanity is manifested in your print-shop group. Thank you for the notice of *Pisces*. Already I have heard from William Burford and others, and our circle widens.

Richard Centing
Editor *Pisces*
Ohio State University Libraries
Columbus, Ohio 43210

The Phoenix arrived yesterday. Layout and typography are excellent. As for the contents it was a mixed bag. Jean Giono's writing is powerful. (I never fired my rifle because I didn't see anyone to shoot. I am just as glad now that I didn't. I was in combat only for 10 days before our company was over-run and taken prisoner by the Germans — and the first five days were fairly quiet.)

Giles Weaver's piece was fascinating even though it is so strange. And the section from D. E. Steward's

novel *Burn Us In The Night* is frightening. I have a real fear that America will go fascist, then after the fascists have totally wrecked it a hard-nosed Communist take-over will come, either from within or from an outside invasion.

In the editorial comments there is an allusion to the prospect of euthanasia being used to eliminate costs of caring for crippled and psychotic war veterans. I don't think it is likely under the present government but a fascist regime in this country would undoubtedly use such methods, just as Hitler did with Jews and gypsies and other expendable undesirables. Anyhow I could never survive another prison camp experience, physically or mentally.

I would give anything to be transferred to a planet where nobody would have to be worried about being sent for *any* reason to a slave labor detention camp or prison and where war and cruelty were unknown and people could express their thoughts to one another without fear.

As for the rest of the magazine it was interesting even though I can't agree with all of it. The photography was beautiful, especially the portrait *Young mother and infant daughter.*

While I was a prisoner of war in Germany and forced to work in a munitions factory, I learned that

Germans were human beings. After the war when I drifted into the homo circles of New York City, I learned that blacks and Jews were human beings. Later in Arizona I became involved with a Mexican girl who was almost pure Indian and I learned that Indians are human beings. And when I was in the Army I learned that poor whites are human beings.

Yet the best way to get along within the totalitarian regime America is now disintegrating into is to be the type of person who only sees as human beings those in his own social and racial and ethnic group. Then one can stand by and tolerate and even encourage the liquidation of 'enemies' such as radicals, student protesters and racial minorities — and patriotically support wars of extermination against the 'gooks' of other nations. Incidentally while in prison camp I also learned that Russians were human beings. All this could make it very hard for me in a totalitarian America.

In Germany in 1944 it was a serious crime to steal a bicycle but killing Jews was a salaried official occupation just as killing Vietnamese men, women and children is now a salaried honorable profession in America complete with decorations, medals and bonuses. My guess is that within the next few years it will be legal to kill blacks in America and that a

government bounty will be paid for every black killed regardless of age or sex.

I had a strange sad dream last night. I dreamed I was staying at a New England lodge with a Russian engineer of about my own age who was visiting this country. We'd both had a bad time in World War II and we were discussing the swiftening march toward World War III. He said he went along with the communist crap to hold onto a good job and social status back home in Russia and I said I went along with the anti-Black position of my government in order to get along in American society. (I hope someday the fears underlying this dream will be a thing of the past for all men.)

Another thing that has caused me a lot of conflict and difficulty is that ever since World War II I have looked upon the Nazi racial hatreds as a natural human phenomenon and not a unique manifestation of Germanic behavior. Just look back at the Polish and Russian pogroms. Or American slavery and extermination of the Indians. I know you believe the roots of these divisions and hatreds amongst men be much deeper, but to me racism is a melancholy yet fairly normal human response to adverse social and economic circumstances.

And my outlook has colored my whole life. For

one thing it has greatly lowered my evaluation of humanity. It led me to take a nihilistic approach to life after World War II ended. When I returned to America I drifted into homosexuality, pot, etc. My outlook meant that I didn't want to invest much in human beings. This fitted in with homo life — sex with rarely any affection, sex without emotional involvement, loveless sex.

It also means that I look upon war resisters and conscientious objectors as rather pathetic souls who expect far too much from their fellow human beings. Thus I also envy the conscienceless sociopath — the racist who says 'the only good nigger is a dead nigger'. And the mafioso who sees nothing wrong with making money off narcotics and prostitution and pornography. Along with the frivolous fools who regard life as a joke. All such people are better suited for this world than me. Even you people, for that matter.

In addition I feel very helpless when it comes to coping with life. I never know when I may be faced with the choice of joining the forces of hatred and destruction or becoming one of their victims. That was the choice faced by many Germans who loathed and feared the evil Nazis who had emerged in their nation but who feared suffering and death for them-

selves even more. This is the same choice presently facing Americans. Now it is our turn to be confronted by a cruel deranged government that keeps a daily body count of the 'gooks' it kills abroad while it prepares for the extermination of blacks and Indians and 'spics' within the nation.

There is perhaps one legitimate category of persons who can be happy in this world — those who are completely involved in their work and can shut out the world around them. And the physical clod who accepts life unquestioningly — like a sausage grinder accepts all that comes its way — can also do quite well. So can a clam, for that matter.

These feelings about human nature have made it difficult for me to get along with idealists who exacerbate my sense of guilt and I don't ever know whether they are sincere. Whereas the straight fascist bastard *is* sincere. Also the straight fascist doesn't make me feel threatened since I am an upper middle class white, not a lowly black serving a life term in prison for a crime he didn't commit.

I wish we were in a world where we could live in accordance with the best aspects of religious ideals without having to expose ourselves to all sorts of trials and dangers and fears, including poverty.

I think there is some glimmer of hope in that

people are fairly decent to one another when they don't feel threatened. And I think that further research and insight into *natural* behavior may some day free us from the curse of 'human nature,' provided we can survive that long.

I have been reading a book called *New York Spy*. It's a guide to Manhattan that goes into the more exotic aspects of the city. It makes the 'gay' world seem so romantic. I remember it as sordid and sick. I may get up again to New York some day but my memories of the city are for the most part painfully unpleasant. And my intuition tells me to stay here in Florida, avoid controversial people and places.

It is unfortunate that so many people I know want to provoke the very forces in society which I want to stay on the right side of for self-protection. After all — unless you're black or poor — why make yourself into a lightning rod and attract the wrath of the hateful ones.

Strangely enough the local library here in Fort Lauderdale has the *Nation* and *New York Review* so I am able to keep a sort of covert outsider's tab on some aspects of the radical movement.

But I don't expect to go north again until I am stronger within myself. For the present I will confine my trips to safe tourist resorts in the Caribbean and

Bahamas. I am still so shaky emotionally that I have to live a plain vanilla life. Even movies that vividly portray violence and cruel sex so upset me that I now avoid them. 'Mission Impossible' is as far as I can go with violence portrayed on a screen. I can read about those things but to see them is too much for me. I should like to add that violence and sadism in movies trouble me far more than crude sex. But the cynically motivated movie industry has gone from crude sex to pornography and pornography always seem to descend into sadism. Movie censorship is becoming a political issue in Florida and I don't know whether to vote for it or against it.

Fort Lauderdale with its slow old-fashioned pace is ideal for my state of mind at present. But one depressing fact stands out: if one is to enjoy a decent middle class life and material security, one does so always at someone else's expense. This is why there is a sort of justification for the fascists' paranoid 'law of the jungle' code of conduct.

Looking back on my life I think I would have been better off in a totally authoritarian regime that would have protected me from the knowledge of the truth and from realizing much of the evil in mankind as well as protecting me from my own weaknesses and guarding me from temptations in the areas of sexual

aberrations, drugs and alcohol. However I am speaking only for myself.

Often I wish I had remained in the Army. I respected military discipline and contemptuously regarded the civilian world as disorganized back when I was in my twenties. I don't think Lieutenant Calley is representative of the Army and I don't care for all this hero worship they have for him down here in Florida. He is not a holy martyr, just an ordinary deformed slob who over-interpreted orders which were murky and ambiguous and issued forth the vast evil now centered in Washington and the Pentagon.

I have written a long rambling letter, but there's no one down here to talk to and I guess I talk freely like this now only to people I meet in my dreams, so I'll send it on.

P.R.

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

P.S. There are culture fads that romanticize the Gay culture, the alcohol culture and the drug culture. I am in sympathy with those who regard these things as neither criminal nor romantic, but as forms of emotional sickness. Romanticizing these cults has a bad effect on many young people. I have lived within all of those cults and have found only emptiness in them. This is another reason why aside from my fears I

have reluctantly gone back to the square world. There is even a minor attempt to romanticize Nazi Germany. We humans are really fascinated by evil in a strange sick way.

P.P.S. I am planning a trip to the Caribbean this summer while such trips are still possible before 'the lights really go out all over the world'.

At last to receive the Phoenix!! it didn't arrive via regular mail but rather just "appeared" very late last night outside my door and altho i was delighted with the notion of mysterious conveyance, clandestine visitation, etc., i couldn't help but suspect my landlord pulling one more of his casual *rip-offs!* he's a lovely little man but he *steals*, like a pack rat anything of shiny new interest. however, i'm not going to press charges lest he press his own regarding last month's rent still due ahem & anyway here's the Phoenix in my own hot hands so all's cool!

i want to thank you and send along my subscription remission (please find enclosed check and cash *quick* while it's still good.) i've only just had time to peruse the general layout of the Phoenix; especially the beautiful photographs. of course, i feel that i've already been given numerous enticing previews, hav-

ing read portions of the Weaver diary and the Poller piece at the farm.

Have also looked at the poetry by simone weil. she is definitely one of my inter-galactic mentors, and i have had some unusual telepathic experiences while high on her work. in fact, i was reading *Gravity and Grace* (her haunted notes on religion and related topics; Sufi-like sayings but with that twist of self-torture so palatable to our Western sensibility) the nite i flew to northampton, couldn't reach you, danced a witches' jig on the campus, bayed at the moon over Paradise Pond, and ended up in a $13 room at Wiggins where one steps conveniently out of bed into the toilet bowl.

Anyway what I mean is i was glad to revisit weil through the Phoenix. i think all great writers illuminate parapsychological truths so long as one is *open* to the striking evidence of these phenomena, and there are writers who actually exemplify those truths; their words strike us in our animal souls where all barriers of resistance and disbelief are dissolved. such writers are of course dangerous; dealing in a mesmeric language of suggestion; lucid with paradox and geometry, a language whose fascination resides in its metaphorical evocations of death (not death as perpetuator of history or initiator of the tragic,

but as absolute force giving continual and *conscious* rise to its counterpart.) i do believe that our consciousness of life does and must change, is evolving constantly — but then i read about all this "greening" shit that says like wow we did it! we're there! *yeh a whole new Level of Consciousness!* and everybody's eating it up like it was organic granola for breakfast!! well if there *is* a Consciousness III, let us at least hope that it provides for the imminent possibility of Consciousness IV, and *soon!* and *anyway* — after a hard day's greening, groking, and freaking, one still has the right to seek refuge in the apt descriptions of mystery (such as these words — via The Phoenix):

Only the immense space where emptiness and light are
Was suddenly everywhere present, overflowed the heart,
And washed our eyes almost blind under the dust.

my happy trip to california was extraordinarily shapeless as always. i was somewhat surprised to discover that my *entire* family has joined the Internal Revolution — and even *I* have been converted from my polluted menu of limp lettuce and monosodium glutamate to a robust diet of grains, vegetables and no less than *eight* organic vitamin capsules per day.

i mean, kids, i'm so far into it that i've even quit *smoking!* Next thing you know, i'll be developing a sense of *Futurity!*

it all gives me the creeps somehow but move over Organic Freaks and make way for a nervous system like me! And may the hungry exhaustion of my mystical metabolism join me not only unto the Universal — our numb communal wait in prereligious darkness and so *on* — but also again to the Particulars, the Idolators, the *cold-turkey cultists* yeh!

i listen to my Enzymes and hear the *truth* — that is, are not some of us born to *feed* upon gastro-ethereal dogma (it has always been so) and wow here it is again in the neo-proto-form of well who can name it? i mean i don't mind waiting for (*God*) but in the meantime, kids, i wanna be kept *busy.* it's awful but it's timely and perfect, the Eat Religion, because well there's just hundreds of obsessive little rituals to consume all of one's time like picture me in my shawl and longjohns feasting on yeast, popping onion caps and kelp tabs, spooning blackstrap molasses, doing the old water-through-your-nose-trick, garlic-'tween-your-toes trip.

It's endless, the Law. Like wow maybe it's a whole fucking *Covenant* and it doesn't even matter *who* laid it down! i don't mind waiting for (*God*) but in the

meantime, i suppose to pretend a belief in Order whose subtle deceptions *do* exist even in our age (e.g. my new diet landed me the astounding revelation that it is possible to shit at the *same time* every day!!)

all this betrays the fact that i am feeling *super* and i bet you thought i couldn't do it; but trust when you give your fleet-footed herb-monger an assignment, she's not going to sit around sipping rice-frappes(!). which is further to report your loyal root sleuth discovered *ginseng* at New Age in San Francisco. please forgive me for only sending these little packets. Two disappointments for Ginseng fans: 1) It is quite expensive, $3.00 per ounce, $7.50 for a small whole root; 2) It tastes like — well, remember when you were four and ate dog-do? however, i don't want to discourage you. true, it took rick and i 3 hours to get a cup of ginseng tea down the rathole, but after that we were *flying!* rick, who lives on marlboros and gin, had a brilliant vision and temporary conversion to Health Foods. i experienced the glowing illusion that my bosom had expanded to three times its normal size. needless to say ginseng is pretty *weird.*

on coming back from california i suffer the usual adjustment symptoms; chronic depression takes a week or two to make its graceless return, but go west i must for california remains the crazy country we

ever knew it was. and my kin are in the forefront:

Peter, my 21 year old brother, a budding rock star who has changed his last name to 'Music', applying himself at the Social Security office:

Official: "Your mother's maiden name?"

Peter: "Denise Deschamps."

Official: "Your father's name?"

Peter: "Edward Howell Music."

And so on. they did issue him a card.

Mother stressing the fact that boyohboy is Peter going to be sorry when he turns 65 and tries to collect Social Security. Peter Music having *no* intention of turning 65 — *ever.*

Barbara, my 12 year old sister, beginning to develop tits and remarking:

"well roxy i guess we don't exactly belong to a Raquel Welch family do we!"

Saint Jacques, my 23 year old brother, living on the freeway in a Packard station wagon filled waist-high at all times with empty bottles and cans, explaining that he is *not* a 'dirty hippie slob' but rather was *elected* by the Commune to go to the Recycling Center every week.

Peter weighing in at an ethereal 110 lbs., having become a 'juicer' (one who eats only carrots — 60 per day — crushed all to hell in a $400 machine

called a "triterator" owned by rich Stanford weirdos all weighing in at 110 lbs.)

Mother being named the Martha Mitchell of Big Fork, Montana because of an irate letter she wrote to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Daddy, after one of Peter's home demos, putting 18 lbs. of carrot sawdust (triterated) down the Electric Garbage Disposal which returned the compliment by exploding onto the kitchen floor the carrot sawdust plus 6 months of Establishment compost.

Saint Jacques' hair having been cultivated to so hostile a length and breadth, that when we walked into a bar at the San Francisco Airport they called the police.

Peter Music leaving for Los Angeles to meet and shake thin orange hands with the doctor who invented Carrot Juice.

and it does continue. including the fact that my older brother has begun resembling Robbie on *My Three Sons,* the American Dream sibling who absorbs the Revolution by letting his hair curl right down there over the white collar a bit. actually, he's looking more like Bobby Sherman, a pretty boy Rock Star (who made it big on the same label that recorded St. Jacques) whom my sister has a crush on but can't admit it so she writes him letters like: "Dear Bobby,

My brothers have met and worked with you and they say you're a real asshole. Love Barbara".

without a doubt *The Graduate* is one of the more benign films of our time as it does not even begin to portray the hollow grotesquerie of landing at the Los Angeles Airport.

i had my Tarot Cards read (at Jacques' commune) by a lovely hippie who translated the secret configuration thus:

"you have ambitions to continue your studies but are hoping that some obstacle will arise so that you can just say fuck it."

what a profound mystery those Tarot Cards! The hold-up at UCLA has to do with them never receiving an official transcript from Smith — this was my fault; i'm in hopeless need of a secretary — but they were *neglecting* to inform me of this mistake which is why i felt justified in spending $300 of borrowed $$ to fly out to old L.A. and check out the scene only to discover that I am prepared to say fuck it *right now* before the *real* obstacles arise.

anyway, what a crazy place to study Religion.

meanwhile back here in Cambridge i have entered into one more love-shove out of boredom and the sheer delight of romantic suffering. unfortunately i find that there is nothing more frustrating and finally

tedious than taking these absurd emotional risks for every man one meets. unless one enjoys running in place. another great misfortune: my Jesus Freak has skipped Cambridge leaving me in something of a spiritual lurch. He has left to join L'Abri. a Christian Commune in Switzerland, with many promises to write letters of guidance etc. But i do feel somewhat deserted; giving up hope of a large revelation and relying instead upon the small miracles of an everyday sort. which do occur and are having their insistent effect upon me.

but i have trouble speaking of all this yet as i cannot be sure that i take it seriously. i only feel that the self-limiting philosophies of despair are not sufficiently remedied by the similarly enclosed philosophies of process (metaphorical being-and-becoming etc.). i really need a Person, a God. and i do not consider this need a crutch any more than i would consider outgrowing my need for food, shelter or love, what i find most difficult to teach myself is that Truth may be completely contrary to our modern sensibility.

sorry this letter's so full of summer torpor. after brief recuperation from the ginseng caper, your ever-ready plant pirate awaits in alert anticipation the next Mission Impossible including Peace on Earth. and love to all. *roxy*

Thank you to have honored my request for free copy of your journal. I find palpable & real the form and life of *The Phoenix*. I enclose a poem in memory of Janis Joplin, perhaps you can use it. In fellowship,

Daniel G. Culla
Madrid, Spain

Come! the sea is foaming onto the beach
And the wild spirit of our vanished sister
Is dancing on the cresting waves

Joplin, troubadour,
Sister of the love & the drug
Your thirst so mad —

Does some inward City of Light await us
Wherefrom, drinking of flowers we wander abroad
In these seas and mists of daybreak?

O! to expire early, at this five o'clock in the morning
Here in the midst of damp violets
Perfuming dawn with their erotic drowsiness

O! to join you Janis, beloved sister, dancing
there in the seawaves
With rippling skirts, foam-edged

Nidra Poller sent me your Vol. III No. 1 issue & I can't tell you how delighted I am. It is exactly what a magazine of this tradition should be — and you have some of my favorite people. Ray YoungBear (whose father used to be OldBear) was one of my students two years ago up at Bemidji & was always valuable for his contributions in class & for teaching the other students something of the Sauk & Fox grammar.

I am assuming editorship of the University of Kansas City Review, and plan to change the title and format. And I need good writing. Mss. should be sent to me, care of University of Missouri at Kansas City. I'd really appreciate your making this known. I'm writing to Nidra to see all of her unpublished work. Best wishes.

David Ray

Tom McGrath gave me a copy of your renewal issue of *The Phoenix* and I think it is a beautiful job, in every way. I have no money for a subscription but will pass my copy around (some of my friends may be more affluent!) Also will see that our school library — I teach English at Moorhead State College in Moorhead, Minnesota — gets a subscription.

Enclosed is a copy of *Dacotah Territory*, a magazine

that I have just begun editing here. You no doubt will be interested in the work by Tom McGrath and Robert Bly. In any case, congratulations.

Mark Vinz
Editor *Dacotah Territory*

Congratulations on your new issue which I have read with interest and love. It really is a "medium of communion for those who keep faith in mankind and Creation." And this is all that someone who has devoted himself to the life and work of D.H. Lawrence as I have, could want it to be. All good wishes for *The Phoenix*.

James C. Cowan
Editor *The D. H. Lawrence Review*
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Anais Nin was at Hopkins yesterday. She drew such a large crowd they had to move to an auditorium, which was unfortunate because something is lost in the move from seminar to lecture hall.

A couple (John Hermmann, from the vanished *Chesapeake Weekly Review*, and his wife) had brought their baby. It fussed a little, then more. The man in front of them half turned and looked intellectually

annoyed. Anais was getting ready to read from Djuna Barnes. The papa took the baby and started to leave but Anais turned to him and so charming said she didn't mind the baby. She was sincere. He went back and sat down and within three minutes that baby was asleep. So it was a silent example of what she was saying about the relationship between imagination and reality.

She spoke of a need for introspection, aquaintance with one's self in reaction to our culture's *exteriorness*. But where she left me is in her belief in psychology. She is not simple minded about it, not at all. And her first loyalty is to art. Yet I thought she must have to consider why psychotherapy, in general, is desensitizing and imprisoning spirits and evoking so many fake rationalists and madmen in sane armor.

There was no chance to question her on this — I just can't ask questions at a large public meeting, or wait afterwards in a crowd around a 'figure' — and of course one would not challenge her anyway. She is a charming lady

I've been reading Hamsun's *The Culture of America.* Except that I am horrified every time he refers to 'Negroes', I laughed all through the book. But when I think of Hamsun calling black people half-ape — well, either I must say that is the measure of my

respect for him as an artist, that he should have known that they are his peers and his brothers and that they, too, found their way beyond the imprisonment of apehood (as he should have further known that apes are not just apes) *or* I must say: look at the limits of understanding in a man so far beyond others in his insights and sensibility — look how coarse he is. And myself? In what ways, as each of us is, am I coarse? Whose cries am I indifferent to? To whose suffering glances am I blind?

I couldn't make it all the way through Dunne's *Experiment in Time.* Dunne bases his thought and his experiments on common sense visions of time as linear. I hope you read Whorf. Whorf has a lot to say about the peculiarity of certain languages which speak of time in spatial metaphors *as if* it had length.

Also reading, still, Giono's *Chant du Monde* and that wonderfully evocative composite biography of D. H. Lawrence edited by Edward Nehls which you recommended. Love to all of you.

Nidra Poller, Baltimore, Maryland

Almost no one knows of Simone Weil's poems. She wrote them as she approached the end of her life during World War II and she passed on to us only nine in all. Of these, apart from the two pub-

lished in the recent resurrection issue of *The Phoenix,* none have ever appeared in English.

The underlying mission of Simone Weil's spirit manifested itself very early in her life. Born in Paris on February 3, 1909, and nurtured in a well-to-do Jewish family (her father was a doctor), Simone Weil was only a seven-year old schoolgirl when she began to join herself openly and steadfastly with the lowly ones of society. She refused to wear warm socks in the winter because children of poorly-paid workers had to go barelegged; and all during World War I (through which the 19-year old infantryman Jean Giono was passing) she refused to eat sugar because the soldiers at the front were deprived of it.

In 1931 when she was 22-year old teacher at a secondary school for girls in Le Puy she walked with striking workers in picket lines, contributed to the *Revolution Proletarienne* review and abstained from eating more than the unemployed workers were allotted by government relief. When, in reprisal for her radical acts, the school authorities threatened to revoke her license to teach she told them she would regard such censure as a high honor.

In 1934 she left her teaching career and went to work in the Renault automobile factory, seeking to experience more deeply the life of the workers. She

suffered frequent severe migraine headaches and these were aggravated by the factory noise and din but she refused any comfort which would make her lot any different from that of the other factory girls amongst whom she worked. Her profound insights into the uprooted lives of factory workers are contained in her early book *The Need For Roots*.

In 1936, at the age of twenty-seven, she went to Barcelona to serve as a nurse and share the suffering of the Spanish Republican Army on the Catalonian front. Burned quite severely in an accident, she was taken by her parents to Portugal for hospitalization and healing.

In Portugal, seeking to find her way through the agony of one of her migraine headaches, she went into a cathedral. There, while listening to the singing of a Gregorian chant, she had her first mystical experience. She tells us:

"In a moment of intense physical suffering when I was striving to feel love, but without desiring to give a name to that love, I felt, without being in any way prepared for it (for I had never read the mystical writers), a presence more personal, more certain, more real than that of a human being, though inaccessible to the senses and imagination."

Her intense involvement in the human struggle

thereafter became more acute. In 1940, when Paris was occupied by the Nazis, she fled with her parents to the south of France. There, becoming an agricultural worker in the fields Simone Weil, nurtured in a secular and non-religious Jewish family, continued her studies of Greek and Hindu philosophy and extended her knowledge of Sanskrit while writing her book *Waiting for God.*

In 1942 she yielded to her parents' entreaties and came with them to America. But she soon returned to England where she sought futilely to be parachuted into France to serve with an initial small group of women volunteers as non-combatant companions and nurses in the resistance movement.

Frail and in poor health she subsisted solely on the meager rations permitted her countrymen in occupied France. On August 24, 1943 she died in England from what medical authorities termed: ' Voluntary starvation'. Her poems are from this final period of her life. Through them flows, from the very center of her being, the singular purity of Simone Weil's voice and in *The Threshold* we hear her — who from early childhood was involved in the struggle against the social injustice and cruelties of this century — foretelling the unexpected liberation of our imprisoned humanity. *W.B.*

It is even better than I imagined it would be — Giono, Giles Weaver, Nidra Poller, Don Rodrigue & most of the poetry. I hope the reaction to Number 1 Volume III is big. It should be. Anything practical I can do for you from here? I think I'll be here a long time.

D. E. Steward
Basel, Switzerland

Thanks for reading my poems and for selecting two for publication.

I looked through *The Phoenix* at Gotham Book Mart and the 8th Street Bookshop and sent my poems to you because I like the work you're publishing. Which isn't the way I feel about many of the current literary journals. I especially admired Jean Giono's *Refusal To Obey.*

I do a fair amount of freelance writing. My most recent article, about an encounter I had this summer with police in Greece right after I interviewed some political prisoners, was just published in the International Herald Tribune of Paris. My best wishes.

Martin Steingesser
Bedford Street
New York

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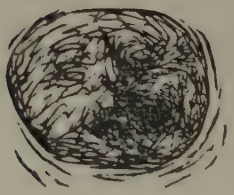

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LINE DRAWING

Jacques Hnizdovsky